

Learn More

Here are more resources to help you make the most of every appointment:

- Read more about the IOM's work on Partnering with Patients: iom.edu/partneringwithpatients
- Check out more ideas for getting the Best Care at Lower Cost: iom.edu/bestcare
- Read up on The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Patient Care program: moore.org/patient-care
- Look up "The Patient Is In," from Blue Shield of California Foundation: blueshieldcafoundation.org

The statements made in this brochure are those of the authors or individual meeting participants and do not necessarily represent the views of all workshop participants, the planning committee, The Roundtable on Value & Science-Driven Health Care, or the National Academies.

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PARTNERING *with* PATIENTS

Ideas for how patients
can make a difference

About the Institute of Medicine

The IOM asks and answers the nation's most pressing questions about health and health care. Established in 1970, the IOM is the health care arm of the National Academy of Sciences, which was chartered under President Lincoln in 1863.

About Blue Shield of California Foundation

Blue Shield of California Foundation is one of the state's largest and most trusted grantmaking organizations. Its mission is to improve the lives of all Californians, particularly the underserved, by making health care accessible, effective, and affordable, and by ending domestic violence.

About the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Established in September 2000, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation seeks to advance environmental conservation, scientific research, and patient care—around the world and in the San Francisco Bay Area. Its mission is “to achieve significant, lasting and measurable results in environmental conservation, science, patient care, and the San Francisco Bay Area.”



As a patient, you can be in charge. You have the power to make your health care better. That's the main message that came out of a recent workshop, where patients and health care leaders worked together to discuss what can be done to make sure you get the best care. When you take some of these simple steps, you are also contributing to something larger—helping the whole health care system get better. Here are the main ideas that came out of the meeting:

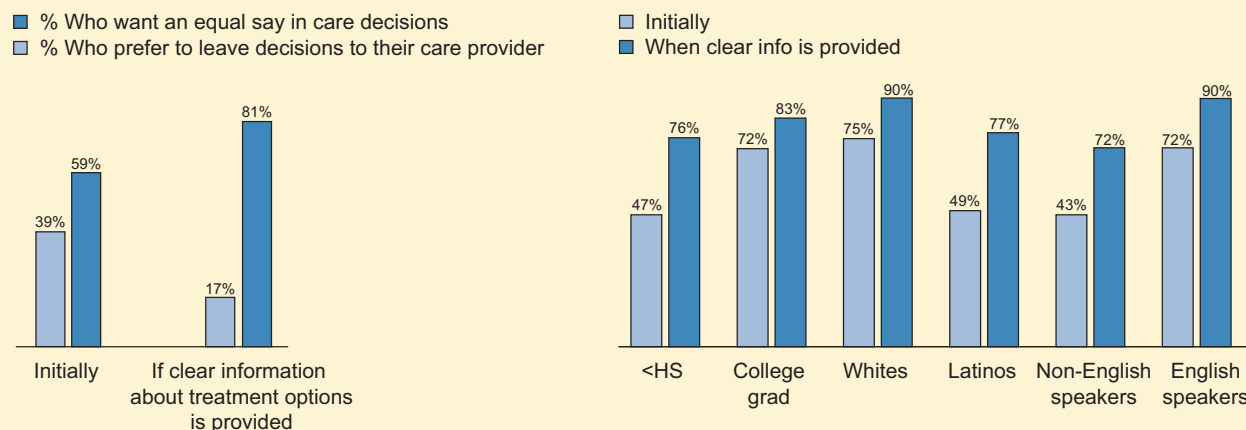
- **Culture change is key**—New ways of doing things won't work without a new culture. In order to get better, the health care system needs patients like you to become partners, not just customers.
- **Listen first, listen fully**—When you and your clinician talk, both of you should listen carefully to each other's ideas. Then, you're better able to make decisions about treatment together.
- **Learn to work together**—We all have room to grow. There are lots of ways for patients and doctors to learn to understand each other better.
- **Trust matters**—It should be easy for you to understand the quality and cost of your care. This means that you need health care providers who you can trust to explain health care choices in plain language.
- **When patients are better informed and more involved, health care gets better**—If patients get more involved in their care, we can start to make health care better and more affordable. And that means healthier people and communities.

Become a Patient Partner Today

Here is a checklist of things that you can do today to make your health care better:

- [] **Write down your questions.** That way, you are ready to get all of the information you need from your clinician during a single visit.
- [] **If you don't feel comfortable asking a question, ask for help.** Talking about your health can be difficult and some people are afraid that the clinician could get upset. Your helper can be a nurse, a family member, or someone else you trust to speak for you.
- [] **Look up your clinician and your hospital before you go.** There's lots of information on the Internet about the health care providers and hospitals in your community. Start by looking up your local hospitals at hospitalcompare.hhs.gov.
- [] **Take advantage of the power of prevention.** An apple a day might not be enough to keep you healthy, so ask your clinician about what kind of preventive services are available in your community.

- [] **Participate in wellness programs.** Lots of employers, hospitals, community centers, schools, and churches have free wellness programs. Ask around, or visit healthfinder.gov.
- [] **Stay healthy.** The best thing you can do to become a patient partner is to take care of yourself. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, exercise, and when you notice new symptoms, tell your doctor right away. Get started at fda.gov/ForConsumers.
- [] **Help track your care.** When a shift changes in a hospital, sometimes patient information gets lost in the shuffle. Speak up to make sure that you know who your provider is, and that your provider knows what care you've had and what you still need.
- [] **Ask to see your records.** As a patient, you can see your own medical records. Ask your clinician to show you your records in a format that works for you, either using a computer, your smart phone, or paper.
- [] **Start today.** Pick one thing that you can do today to become more involved in your own health. By becoming a patient partner, you're helping make health care better for everyone.



Patients want to participate in decisions, with up to 81% saying they want an equal say in their care decisions (left). Although some patients were less willing to participate in shared decision making, the gap between patients of varying educational levels and language abilities largely disappeared when they were provided information (right). Reprinted courtesy of Blue Shield of California Foundation.