

RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2

How do you choose a doctor or hospital? What are your sources of information? How should public policy promote quality health care providers?

- Greater transparency on performance metrics especially those related to health improvement and risk reduction.
- Referral from family, friends, or health care provider. Public policy decision-makers should only establish guidelines that can be accessed by public. Health carriers can utilize these guidelines to establish appropriate reimbursement methodologies.
- Determination of quality, i.e., what is quality; should be the first consideration. We have seen hospitals and physicians reject sick patients because they do not want to have their quality statistics jeopardized. We have also seen hospitals with 14 primary care physicians where one physician refuses to fill out the necessary forms and consequently the institution is given a poor rating. We have seen hospitals with excellent hospice/palliative care departments that are penalized for high death rates. Obviously, these are examples of poor quality that are NOT examples of poor quality.
- As a health care professional, I depend on colleagues' recommendations and my personal experience and those experiences of my patients.
- Public policy needs to expand the public relations regarding the various types of health care providers who provide quality care. Nurse Practitioners have been providing comprehensive health care services for over forty years and have demonstrated significant strides in educating patients at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of health promotion.
- First I look at what is available on my employer healthcare plan. Then, I ask around and find who is open to alternative medicine. I will see alternative practitioners as needed at all stages of healthcare: prevention, acute and chronic disease, e.g. licensed acupuncturist/herbalist, chiropractor, energy bodyworker, and when possible a licensed massage therapist. All of these have made a major difference in me staying healthy, often helping me avoid colds/flu, pain and infection. My other sources of information come from the website, my local health food store, and other healthcare practitioners and their patients.
- Public Policy should promote quality healthcare providers with accurate, comprehensive information. There are several groups already at work collaborating to provide credentialing and standards for qualified providers (e.g. see Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine, www.imconsortium.org, Council of Colleges of Acupuncture of Oriental Medicine, www.ccaom.org)"
- There is a strong 'informal' referral system. As a nurse I am constantly asked "If your mother had _____ (whatever the problem) who would YOU go to?" I ask the same thing of people working inside an institution or medical practice group. While there are ads on TV/newspaper etc., it is the informal network that is perceived as 'most accurate'.
- Address prevention and self-maintenance of healthy practices.
- Expand providers to include practitioners other than MDs to guide and assist patients (we are in throes of MD shortage as it is).
- I am a military retiree, so my family and I are blessed with knowing where to go and who to contact about medical issues. The regular insurance system is so complicated, we are grateful not to have to rely on this.
- Based on objective means & the subjective (experience)
- moving toward a transparent system will assist in achieving this goal

- This is dictated by which doctor or hospital subscribes to which insurance company. Every time one changes insurance companies, because of cost or change in, one may need to change providers (regardless of the relationships developed).
- A policy is basically a goal and the goal needs to be education about wellness on many levels from pre-school through the education of health care providers. Another goal needs to be directed to a people centered health care/wellness paradigm (from the profit driven insurance company paradigm).
- Help practitioners develop outcomes study on innovative care
- I choose a doctor or hospital by my Medicare Advantage Plan. I go online, read advertisements and ask friends plus I know by being a physician for 38 years in the San Diego area what hospitals and doctors I would like.
- Public policy may promote quality health care providers by linking information to them on a public website but information also needs to have public input as well as input from the provider and be updated daily.
- I ask my friends. Then look at my insurance coverage.
- Hospital - geographical proximity, most likely to use for trauma care... secondary concern = area of specialty, pediatrics; rehab; tertiary concern = philosophy of care ie. 7day adventist
- doctor - ASK lots of friends, health care providers, internet
- promote CHOICE... not only of physicians but providers that promote WELLNESS
- For this I would like to refer you to the Pew Internet and American Life Project. (www.pewinternet.org If you are not familiar with it, it is an eye opener.
- I often must rely on the insurance provider network, but I also have had a lot of trial and error with respect to quality health care providers. We need to think about our metrics for evaluating providers, and place value on those providers that embrace wellness principles in their practices. For example, how often are doctors evaluated on their ability to prevent illness or impart information about health promotion?
- Current methods for selecting physicians are non-functional due to a lack of data. I fortunately have connections to leading providers and can use them as resources. We need a standardized system to provide data about physicians and outcomes. I had a Letter to the Editor published in the Wall Street Journal regarding this.
- I chose by reputation and word of mouth. Sources are often peers or advertising. Public policy could support holistic and integrated approaches for health care provider training and self-care. We need to remember to heal the healers.
- Friend or doctor referral or online research of doctors background. Health care providers should be promoted on the quality of their work
- my Kaiser person tells me
- I look for availability of complementary and alternative medicine.
- Word of mouth from friends and family.
- I think there should be a website where patients can list comments about their experiences with doctors and hospitals. Public pressure.
- Choose a doctor through word of mouth. Public policy should promote quality health providers by rewarding with reimbursement.
- With difficulty, even though I spent over 36 years in the DoD's medical system ... a REAL system, by the way ... which gave me much insight regarding professional competence. I rely primarily on word-of-mouth from respected colleagues. Public policy needs first to establish TRUSTWORTHY sources of information for the public and continuing prevention and health promotion educational activities for all providers.

- First, by those affiliated with my insurance company. Then, by reference from my physician(s)
- How? Great question. By advertising their good outcomes?
- I choose doctors from referrals or reputation of the organization they work within. Public policy could promote quality health care providers by collecting and publicizing information about their credentials, licenses, and complaints brought against them as well as steps taken to resolve (something like Better Business Bureau and Amazon.com feedback, and Angie's list).
- I choose my physicians by referrals from colleagues and other health experts. Information on physicians and health care systems should be evaluated for patient satisfaction and the results posted so that providers can learn from the experience of others. This would prompt quality improvement.
- Another approach is to establish a clear definition of what it means to be a "quality health care provider." For example, in the case of obesity and related ailments a "quality health care provider" would have knowledge and demonstrated skills to teach and motivate lifestyle change not just to improve weight levels, but also to enhance emotional, and social aspects of weight and well-being.
- Along with a clear definition of provider quality there should be a clear definition and assessment of what constitutes good health and well-being, so that there would be a basis for inspiring goal setting and charting progress. "
- I am fortunate to have private insurance. It is still difficult to choose a physician and it is still a seven minute visit.
- In the end, I spend out of pocket to keep myself healthy through lifestyle choices and with massage, acupuncture, organic healthy foods, etc. I rarely need to use my insurance except for emergencies or routine exams."
- I use word of mouth and look for doctors who embrace my world view, that of healing and healthy, respectful health care that gives a patient respect and dignity. I don't care if the doctor went to an Ivy-League school. I care that the doctor is perceptive, smart, compassionate, wise, and meticulous. Public policy should teach the consumer/patient to be more vocal and provide feedback to doctors who do well and who don't do well, without fear of retribution.
- I select providers based on personal referral and my own research (internet). My freedom of choice is hampered only by insurance coverage.
- Public policy should empower consumers with actionable information. This means transparency on costs, education, clinical experience, and outcomes (including legal actions).
- Public policy should support cradle-to-grave health and wellness care with appropriate economic incentives for provider compliance.