

# Are You Choosing Wisely in Your Professional Practice?

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To enhance the value of care provided to Americans, the American Board of Internal Medicine and Consumer Reports launched the Choosing Wisely® initiative in 2012. Choosing Wisely educates providers and patients about high-frequency, low-value care practices that can be avoided to decrease cost and increase the value of health care. The Oncology Nursing Society collaborated with the American Academy of Nursing to add the first-ever nursing-focused list to those previously submitted by more than 70 specialty societies.

## At a Glance

- The Choosing Wisely initiative offers national healthcare specialty organizations the opportunity to specify which low-value practices to avoid to help promote high-quality patient care.
- More than 70 specialty organizations and more than 30 consumer groups have signed on to develop and disseminate these recommendations.
- Provider and patient education and communication are essential to promote implementation of these recommendations across care settings and specialties.

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Most clinical practice guidelines focus recommendations on best practices to be included when providing care to patients. Since 2012, the American Board of Internal Medicine's (ABIM's) Choosing Wisely® initiative ([www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org)) has worked to help providers understand which outdated care practices they should not offer. Inspired by a challenge issued in an editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* to specialty societies to identify their top five frequently offered but low-value services (Brody, 2010), the ABIM Foundation partnered with Consumer Reports to launch Choosing Wisely. By offering professional organizations the

opportunity to self-identify areas for improved stewardship of finite resources based on their own review of available evidence, the initiative has grown steadily from participation by nine original specialty societies to include collaborations with more than 70 organizations by the end of 2015. It offers resources in clinician- and patient-friendly language.

## Recognizing the Need

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation sponsored a telephone-based survey conducted in the winter of 2014 to assess the perceptions of a nationally representative sample of 600 practicing physicians in

the United States regarding the potential to reduce overuse of low-value services. Almost 75% of respondents noted a serious problem regarding the frequency of unnecessary diagnostic tests or procedures, 58% felt that they were best positioned to address the problem, and 15% believed that responsibility should rest with the government (ABIM Foundation, 2014). Almost half of the respondents reported that they received a request from a patient at least once a week to order an unnecessary test or procedure. Although 70% of physicians in that position felt that communication with these patients about why the service is not indicated often convinces the patient to withdraw the request, about half reported that they would still order the test or service if the patient insisted, despite recognizing it as unnecessary (ABIM Foundation, 2014).

To help counter pressure originating from patients who request low-value services, the ABIM worked with Consumer Reports from the outset of the initiative to engage and educate patients about how to make evidence-based treatment choices. A key aspect of the initiative is focused on promoting open communication about the value of medical services and how providers and patients jointly can evaluate care planning options. The ABIM Foundation worked with Drexel University to create free, interactive, provider-focused modules intended to educate about the initiative, enhance skills and provide talking points on how to elicit patient concerns and beliefs, provide empathy, and overcome barriers when talking with patients about low-value care choices. For patients, printable, plain-language versions of many of the clinician-focused items on the specialty society lists are available (ABIM