

WFWP USA: The Mindful Path - Health and Vitality

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True health is not just the absence of illness, but the presence of vitality.

April is National Minority Health Month which highlights the importance of improving the health of racial and ethnic minority communities. The theme for National Minority Health Month 2023 is Better Health Through Better Understanding. When patients are provided with culturally and linguistically appropriate information, they are empowered to create healthier outcomes for themselves and their communities.

This year's theme focuses on improving health literacy and health outcomes. Health literacy is about people being able to find, understand, and use health information. As a team, medical providers, pharmacists, hospital personnel, and social workers should have a common goal to improve how information is provided to individuals. Everyone has the right to accurate health information that helps them make informed medical decisions. Health services should be delivered in ways that are understandable and beneficial to health, vitality, and quality of life.

As we reflect on Better Health Through Better Understanding, it is the perfect time to evaluate your healthcare provider. Is health information being provided to you to improve and increase your decision-making capacity? Reflect on these statements:

My provider takes time to give accurate information and explains all my choices including the choice to take no action.

My provider is taking into consideration my values and health goals when making suggestions of improving my health. My care is focused on me as an individual.

My provider consistently provides opportunities for me to continue to learn about my health concerns. I am given holistic ideas and suggestions to promote good health.

My provider values open communication and informed decision making and reliable access to health care services.

My provider supports culturally and linguistically appropriate healthcare information.

After reflection, if you feel your healthcare provider is not attentive to your needs, it might be time to have an honest conversation with your doctor. It may even be time to change providers if you don't see an improvement in communication.

The "Ask Me 3" is an educational program that encourages patients and families to ask three specific questions of their providers to better understand their health conditions and what they need to do to stay healthy.

What is my main problem? 2. What do I need to do? 3. Why is it important for me to do this?

"Ask Me 3" is intended to help patients become active members of their healthcare team, and provide an opportunity to improve communications between patients, families, and healthcare professionals.

As you think about Better Health Through Better Understanding, may you have a greater understanding of your health concerns and treatment options, improved communication with your health care providers, and most importantly more vitality. Have a safe and healthy spring.

Marilyn Halpern is the founder and executive director of Aspen Care Services. This locally owned business provides medical power of attorney, care management and professional guardianship services in the Denver Metro area. For more information visit - www.aspencareservices.com or www.aginglifecare.org.