Medical Societies List 135 Medical Tests That Are Often Unnecessary

The Minnesota Health Action Group and Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement will focus on 11 common tests and procedures in Minnesota as part of Choosing Wisely® Campaign

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (Sept. 19, 2013) – Did you know that for her health and that of her baby’s, a pregnant woman should not undergo a C-section before 39 weeks without a clear and compelling medical reason? Or, undergo elective induction of labor before 41 weeks unless she’s ready to deliver? And that a patient should question whether they really need certain pre-op tests prior to things like cataract surgery?

That’s the purpose of Choosing Wisely, a national campaign developed by the ABIM Foundation (American Board of Internal Medicine) to encourage patients and physicians to engage in conversations about certain tests and procedures that are commonly performed, frequently unnecessary, and that may also cause more harm than good. As part of this campaign, 25 medical specialty societies have identified a total of 135 such tests and procedures to date.

The Minnesota Health Action Group (The Action Group) and the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI), which jointly received a grant from the ABIM Foundation to serve as a regional collaborative to promote awareness of Choosing Wisely in Minnesota, announced today the 11 tests and procedures from the Choosing Wisely list of 135 that they will initially focus on across Minnesota. (See list below.)

ICSI will work with health care providers and patients and The Action Group will work with employers to increase awareness of these 11 tests and procedures that doctors and patients should discuss. Consumer and physician tools developed by Consumer Reports, a partner in the Choosing Wisely campaign, will support their efforts.

“We are pleased and excited to have The Action Group and ICSI as partners in this sustained effort,” said Dr. John Santa, MPH, medical director, Consumer Health Reports. “We are jointly committed to putting the brakes on over-testing and over-treatment, and we agree that consumers will benefit when either patients or doctors initiate conversations about these issues.”
The Action Group and ICSI led the process to identify the initial list of 11 tests and procedures that are overused in Minnesota. They were selected based on the belief that limiting their usage could improve patient safety, the strong medical evidence against their overuse, and the Consumer Reports-generated patient-friendly materials that foster physician-patient conversations.

“Choosing Wisely is all about improving patient safety and ensuring that patients receive appropriate care, something all doctors are concerned with,” said Howard Epstein, MD, FHM, and chief health systems officer at ICSI. “Many people believe that the more care they receive, the healthier they will be. But more care is not better care when the evidence tells us so. Patients should be encouraged and supported to question whether these tests and procedures are really going to help them.”

ICSI, The Action Group, and a third Minnesota ABIM Choosing Wisely grantee—the Minnesota Medical Association—have teamed with Consumer Reports to create a website [http://consumerhealthchoices.org/choosing-wisely-minnesota/] that provides doctors, patients and employers in Minnesota with materials to hold discussions on identified tests and procedures.

The Action Group will promote Choosing Wisely to employers and educate them about the important role they play in helping their employees make wise health care choices—including what health care services they receive. It will provide employers with a Choosing Wisely employer toolkit, which includes ready-to-use resources for creating a company-wide campaign.

“The majority of people still receive their health benefits through their employer, which gives employers a unique opportunity to educate and influence the health care purchasing behaviors of their workforce,” said Carolyn Pare, president and CEO of The Action Group. “By providing employers with turnkey tools and campaigns that they can plug in to their existing employee communications framework, we believe we can make a difference in the health care decisions consumers make and the outcomes that are achieved.”

### 11 Choosing Wisely Tests and Procedures Initially Targeted

**In Minnesota by ICSI and The Action Group**

1. Don’t do imaging for low back pain within the first few weeks, unless red flags are present
2. CT scans are not necessary in the immediate evaluation of minor head injuries; PECARN criteria should be used to determine whether imaging is indicated
3. Don’t do imaging for uncomplicated headache
4. Don’t schedule elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor or C-sections before 39 weeks
5. Avoid elective, non-medically indicated inductions of labor before 39 weeks, unless the cervix is deemed favorable
6. Don’t routinely prescribe antibiotics for acute mild-to-moderate sinusitis, unless symptoms last for seven or more days, or symptoms worsen after initial clinical improvement
7. Do not repeat colonoscopy for at least five years for patients who have one or two small (<1cm) adenomatous polyps, without high-grade dysplasia, completely removed via a high-quality colonoscopy
8. Don’t recommend percutaneous feeding tubes in patients with advanced dementia; instead offer oral-assisted feeding
9. Don’t recommend more than a single fraction of palliative radiation for an uncomplicated bone metastasis
10. Don’t perform stenting of non-culprit coronary artery blockages not directly causing an acute heart attack
11. Avoid routine pre-operative testing for low-risk surgeries without a clinical indication

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**About the Minnesota Health Action Group**
Formed in 1988, the Minnesota Health Action Group (formerly the Buyers Health Care Action Group) is a coalition of private and public health care purchasers representing the interests of the organizations that pay for health care goods and services—those that have the highest stake in ensuring health care dollars are carefully spent. The mission of the organization is to improve the value of the health care system in Minnesota, driving for higher quality, lower cost and better health outcomes for all. To learn more, visit [MNHealthActionGroup.org](http://www.mnhactiongroup.org).

**About the Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement**
Formed in 1993, ICSI is a non-profit, quality improvement organization that unites clinicians, health plans, employers, consumers and other stakeholders to bring innovation and urgency to improve the health of the population, optimize the patient experience, and make health care more affordable. It includes 50+ medical group and hospital members representing 9,000 physicians in Minnesota and surrounding states, and is funded through member dues, health plan sponsors, and state and federal health care grants. To learn more visit: [http://www.icsi.org](http://www.icsi.org)

**About the ABIM Foundation**
The ABIM Foundation advances medical professionalism to improve the health care system by collaborating with physicians, health care delivery systems, payers, policy makers, consumer organizations and patients. For more information, visit [www.abimfoundation.org](http://www.abimfoundation.org).