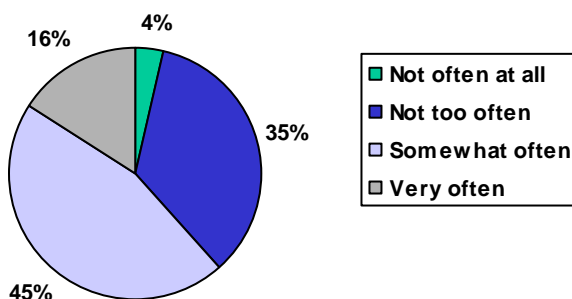


Employees Are Ready to Engage on Healthcare Quality

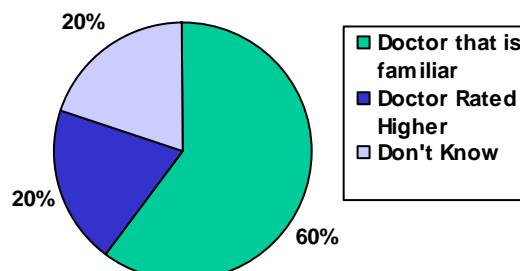
Members of the Maine Health Management Coalition have recently completed one of the largest studies of working people’s attitudes and activities regarding healthcare quality. The survey of over 3,400 employees and dependents asked questions about how employees interact with healthcare providers; how they make decisions about their healthcare; and how they use healthcare quality information to improve the healthcare they receive. The work is based upon the idea that when consumers get involved in the process of selecting and managing their healthcare, they will get better care for themselves. Their involvement can improve the quality of care and reduce costs for everyone. The study results suggest that:

- **A large percentage of employees (49%) have a medical condition that requires on-going care.**
- **Nearly all employees surveyed (94%) agree you have to take active steps to be more engaged in improving healthcare quality.**
- **A large percentage of employed consumers already exhibit behaviors that suggest they are empowered to work with their healthcare providers.**
 - 78% “Always” or “Sometimes” bring a list of questions to discuss when they go to the doctor.
 - 58% say they are “Always” comfortable asking their doctor questions about healthcare quality and medical errors.
- **More work needs to be done before most consumers are vigilant partners with their healthcare providers in assuring healthcare safety.**
 - Less than half (43%) say they “Always” tell a doctor or nurse about any drug allergies, even when they are not asked.
 - Only 60% “Strongly Agree” that they are responsible for managing their own health.
- **Employees know there’s a healthcare quality problem, but are still uncertain about using quality information about healthcare performance.**
 - Even though more than half of those surveyed believed that medical errors happen “somewhat” or “very” often, 60% of them would choose a doctor who they had seen for many years without any problems over a doctor with a better quality rating.

How often do you think patients in hospitals experience medical errors?



If you had to choose between a doctor that was familiar



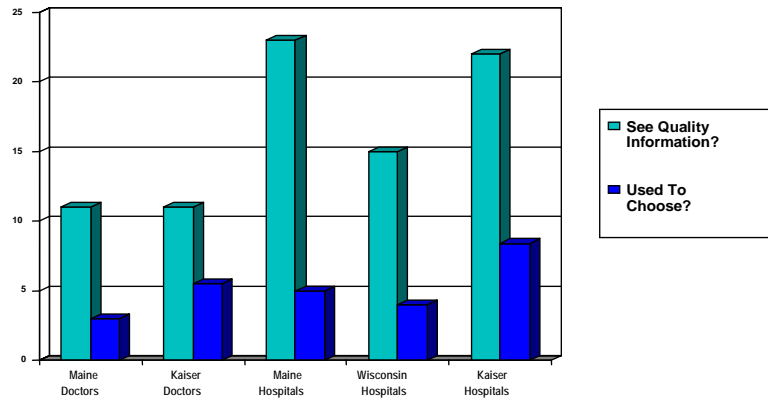
Key Facts

- Most employees (57%) report that their health is “excellent” or “very good”. This is comparable to the statewide results.
- A similar percentage (59%) of all the participants has an on-going medical condition that requires care.
- Nearly all (94%) agree that “people have to be informed and take active steps to avoid poor quality medical care.”
- Only 11% “strongly agree” that they know where to find information that compares the quality of care provided by different hospitals and doctors.
- Of those who saw quality information, about 25% used it to select a hospital.

What this means to your organization

- The ability to control costs and improve healthcare quality will require an effective partnership with informed and engaged consumers.
- You have a core group of employees who are already empowered to manage their own health and healthcare encounters. They need encouragement, systems and information – especially as they begin to evaluate quality performance.
- This core group can help educate other employees about what each of us can do to improve the quality of care we receive.
- There is a great opportunity to shift behaviors and perceptions through the MHMC initiatives.

- Despite being reasonably involved in their health, few employees know where to go for hospital and physician quality information.
- Approximately one in five employees has seen quality information in the last 12 months. About 25% of those used the information to make to choose a doctor or hospital.



Summary

The MHMC study provides a good look at how employed people interact with healthcare providers and how they use healthcare quality information to improve the care they receive.

There is a core group of consumers whose opinions and behaviors suggest they are becoming empowered to manage their own health and healthcare encounters. This is a group that is likely to use quality information to make healthcare decisions - *if it came from an independent source*.

Consumers are working to resolve the conflict between knowing that there are differences in healthcare quality performance and feeling comfortable with the doctors and hospitals they know.

While many MHMC member employees are ready to engage healthcare providers in co-managing care, more work needs to be done to help consumers become vigilant partners with their providers in assuring healthcare safety. Many do not know the questions to ask or where to find quality information.

About the Maine Health Management Coalition's Consumer Health Quality Initiative

The Maine Health Management Coalition is a non-profit group made up of nearly 40 organizations statewide. The Coalition includes health plans, physician groups, hospitals, and employers all working together to improve the quality of healthcare in Maine. The consumer health quality initiative is helping employees learn more about healthcare quality and how to make better healthcare decisions for themselves and their families. Copies of the full report are available by contacting Beth Rodenberger at Crescendo Consulting Group 207 774-2345 x 13.