



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Explore Your Treatment Options

(NAPSA)—If you're like most Americans, you study your options when buying clothing, dining out, watching a movie or buying a car. Now, some patients are also learning about options for selecting medical treatments that can improve their quality of life and overall care.

### The Campaign

A new campaign, "Explore Your Treatment Options," by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the Ad Council, encourages people to become more informed before choosing a treatment for a health condition.

The initiative is designed to increase patients' involvement in their care by offering easy access to unbiased information about treatment options and tools to encourage shared decision-making with their doctors.

The program includes plain-language consumer guides that summarize the scientific evidence on treatments for numerous medical conditions, including diabetes, osteoarthritis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and more.

The program has compared outcomes and effectiveness of different treatments and communicated findings to providers and consumers to help them make informed decisions about health care. For example, "Treating High Cholesterol: A Guide for Adults," provides easy-to-understand information about different kinds of cholesterol medicines, including how they work and their side effects. The guide also includes a list of questions that patients can ask their doctors to help patients choose their best treatment option.

### The Doctor's Advice

"We see the best outcomes when doctors and patients work together to come up with a treatment plan that takes into account



**AHRQ has a new public service campaign that can help patients make more informed decisions about their medical treatment.**

the patient's quality-of-life concerns," said AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D. "Information is power in health care, and this campaign will provide patients with the information they need to become partners with their doctors in their health and health care," she noted.

As part of the campaign, AHRQ's Effective Health Care Program Web site features personal stories from patients with chronic conditions who achieved better health results by exploring their treatment options. In addition, a new Health Priorities Snapshot tool features questions about common daily activities and allows users to rate the importance of quality-of-life concerns. Patients can print out a list of their own health priorities and share it with their clinicians during medical appointments. These features are available at <http://www.effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/options>.

The public service advertisements, which were created pro bono for the nonprofit Ad Council by Grey New York, will run in advertising time and space donated by the media.

### Learn More

You can learn more online at [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov) and [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org).