ADVANCED PRACTICE RNs
(APRNs) influence outcomes for patients in a number of ways, including better symptom management, reduced costs, and improved health. Demonstrating the outcomes of APRN care remains a priority area of focus to define impact and includes tracking APRN-led initiatives, such as Choosing Wisely®. (See The wise choice.)

As a participant in the Choosing Wisely campaign, the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) developed recommendations specific to the role of nursing. Their recommendations, “Fifteen Things Nurses and Patients Should Question,” help providers and patients discuss evidence-supported options for care and avoid duplicating tests and procedures. In March 2017, the AAN added five more recommendations. (See And 5 makes 20.)

APRN-led initiatives
Although reports of Choosing Wisely educational projects for nurses exist, little is known about the effects of APRN-led initiatives targeting these recommendations. In response to the need for more information, an APRN-led initiative launched in 2015 at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) began working in conjunction with an interdisciplinary Choosing Wisely committee to reduce unnecessary treatment, such as overuse of antibiotics.

More than 70 specialty organizations have identified recommendations to improve decision-making and promote appropriate patient-centered care. Choosing Wisely initiatives have included best practice campaigns, quality-improvement projects, and formal research studies within the United States and globally. The Choosing Wisely Canada campaign launched the 10 Million Challenge—a collective action initiative to prevent 10 million unnecessary tests and treatments across Canada by the year 2020 (www.choosingwiselycanada.org).

Consumer Reports partnered with Choosing Wisely and collaborated with specialty societies to create patient-education materials, including brochures that identify common health practices and treatments along with specific questions patients can ask their healthcare providers (www.consumerreports.org/cro/health/doctors-and-hospitals/choosing-wisely/index.htm).
In March 2017, the American Academy of Nursing (AAN) announced five additions to their original list of 15 Choosing Wisely® recommendations. The new recommendations are:

- Don’t routinely order a head computed tomography scan to assess for shunt failure in children with hydrocephalus.
- Don’t routinely order an electroencephalogram on neurologically healthy children who have a simple febrile seizure.
- Don’t administer diazepam for muscle spasm following spine surgery in the elderly.
- Don’t use lumbar puncture opening pressure as a reliable measure of intracranial pressure in children with severe chronic headache.
- Don’t order a formal swallow evaluation in stroke patients unless they fail their initial swallow screen.

To view the full list of the AAN’s 20 Choosing Wisely recommendations, visit www.aannet.org/initiatives/choosing-wisely.

The results from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center APRN-led Choosing Wisely® initiative highlight the role that APRNs can play in promoting clinical practice changes to encourage better use of tests and treatments.

Overall, the initiative resulted in increased clinician awareness and improved ordering practices with a decrease in unnecessary testing and care measures. (See The results prove it.)

Collaborative components
The initiative’s success led to the formation of the Vanderbilt Advanced Practice Nursing Collaborative to help APRN teams at other organizations implement a Choosing Wisely initiative. Using national presentations and publications, the Collaborative follows the Institute for Healthcare Improvement model for achieving breakthrough im-
improvement by learning from one another to improve healthcare practices and measure the impact of implementing Choosing Wisely recommendations. In alignment with a goal identified by the Centers for Medicare Services Transforming Clinical Practice Improvement model, the Collaborative aims to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs by decreasing unnecessary lab or diagnostic testing by more than 15% from baseline for each organization.

To gain access to the Collaborative materials, teams register online at www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/aprn-choosingwisely, where they have access to sample flyers, a sample slide deck, examples of data tracking and displays, and lessons learned by Vanderbilt APRN teams. Participants receive guidance and support to implement Choosing Wisely recommendations; collect, analyze, and compare data; evaluate resulting quality of care and cost of care changes; and dissemi-nate results through presentations and publications.

Through the Collaborative, APRN teams share strategies and participate in conference calls and webinars. In addition, they share quarterly progress reports, evaluation activities, interim findings, and operational or administrative issues. The Collaborative also allows for manuscript submission and publication tracking, and it provides a repository of abstract submissions for presentations at regional, national, and international venues.

Campaign success
Through campaigns like Choosing Wisely, APRNs can lead projects and initiatives that demonstrate their impact on patient care, cost savings, and healthcare quality. The Vanderbilt APRN teams and the resulting Collaborative showcase how teamwork and working across institutions can benefit everyone.

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APRN teams share strategies and participate in conference calls and webinars.

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Selected references


Choosing Wisely. www.choosingwisely.org


