Evidence-based health care: the care you want, but might not be getting

What you should know about evidence-based practice

- Evidence-based practice (EBP) is a problem-solving approach to health care delivery that integrates best evidence from well-designed studies with a clinician’s expertise and patient’s preferences/values.
- You likely expect your health care practitioner is treating you or your loved ones based on the latest medical evidence. Unfortunately, many care decisions are instead based on the “because we’ve always done it that way” model. EBP is still not the standard of care delivered across the globe.
- Peer-reviewed research affirms EBP enhances quality and reliability, improves health outcomes and reduces variations in care and costs.
- Some of the hurdles to implementing EBP include: misperceptions that EBP takes too much time; non-supportive organizational cultures or resistance to change; and lack of EBP mentors, resources or knowledge.

What does this mean to patients?
Patients should talk to their provider(s) to be sure they are getting the latest evidence-based treatment. Here are some tips that may be helpful for patients:

- Ask your provider for the evidence behind the screening or treatments he or she is recommending
- Stop your provider if you don’t understand your care and ask for evidence-based explanations in a language you can understand
- Keep asking questions until you are satisfied with the answers
- Engage in health care decisions with your provider
- Be sure to seek out care, as well as information and resources that are evidence-based and reliable
- Persist if you are not satisfied with your care or the answers to your questions