

Patient support for physician-led health care teams

New health care delivery system reforms hinge on a team-based approach to care. With their seven years or more of postgraduate education and more than 10,000 hours of clinical experience through acquired training, physicians are uniquely qualified to lead the health care team. Physicians, physician assistants, nurses and other health care professionals have long worked together to meet patient needs for a reason: the physician-led team approach to care works. Patients win when each member of the health care team plays the role they are educated and trained to perform.

A 2012 survey found that patients overwhelmingly want a coordinated approach to health care, with a physician leading the health care team.¹ Key findings include:

- ▶ **Ninety-one percent** of respondents said that a physician's years of education and training are vital to optimal patient care, especially in the event of a complication or medical emergency.
- ▶ **Eighty-six percent** of respondents said that patients with one or more chronic conditions benefit when a physician leads the primary health care team.
- ▶ **Four out of five** patients prefer a physician to have primary responsibility for leading and coordinating their health care.

▶ **THREE
OUT OF FOUR**

patients prefer to be treated by a physician ...

- Even if it takes longer to get an appointment
- Even if it costs more

Do you agree with the following statement?	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)	Don't know (%)
Physicians and nurses need to work in a coordinated manner to ensure that patients get the care they need	98	2	0	0
While nurse practitioners are essential to the health care team, they should assist the physician, who should take the lead role in determining the type and level of care to be administered	88	9	2	1
Only physicians have the education and training to look for and diagnose both common and complex medical conditions	83	10	5	2
Nurse practitioners should not be allowed to run their own medical practices without physician involvement	78	19	1	1
Nurse practitioners should not be able to practice independently of physicians, without physician supervision, collaboration or oversight	79	17	3	0
Physicians, rather than nurse practitioners, should diagnose medical conditions	78	16	5	0
Patients benefit when a physician leads the health care team	75	19	3	3

Should only a medical doctor be allowed to perform the following procedures or should other health care professionals be allowed to perform this specific activity?	Only a medical doctor (%)	Other health care professional (%)	Both equally/ either one (%)	Don't know (%)
Amputations of the foot?	92	5	2	2
Diagnose and treat heart conditions?	92	4	3	1
Surgical procedures on the eye that require the use of a scalpel?	90	5	2	3
Treat emergency or traumatic medical conditions, which may be life threatening?	90	4	5	1
Facial surgery such as nose shaping and face lifts?	87	7	3	6
Write prescriptions for complex drugs, including those that carry risk of abuse or dependence?	83	10	5	2
Administer and monitor anesthesia levels and patient condition before and during surgery?	78	15	6	1
Diagnose and treat chronic diseases like diabetes	78	15	6	1
Write prescriptions for medication to treat mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder?	77	11	6	4

1. Baseline & Associates conducted a telephone survey on behalf of the AMA Scope of Practice Partnership between March 8–12, 2012. Baseline & Associates surveyed 801 adults nationwide. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.5 percent at the 95 percent level.