

PATIENT & CAREGIVER QUESTIONS TO ASK PROVIDERS

Overall Recommendations

- CREATE, UPDATE, and PRINT a DIGITAL LIST of pre-existing medical conditions and health history, including all medications and supplements you have taken and currently take, for provider records.
- Bring an ADVOCATE with you to appointments or have an advocate ON CALL to ask questions you may forget or may be incapacitated to answer.
- INQUIRE and ENROLL in GROUP CARE (i.e. prenatal, senior, etc.) to further your health advocacy in the community, including TECH COMMUNITIES (i.e. Michigan Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health, Ohio Elderly Services Program, etc.).
- TROUBLESHOOTING SCRIPTS:
 - “I don’t feel like my questions are being answered. I have a list of five questions that I need specific answers to.”
 - “You said [blank], and it felt like you assumed that I [blank] and/or was [blank], which is incorrect. I wanted to bring this to your attention.”
- BE PREPARED TO MAKE A CHANGE. If unsatisfied with answers and/or appointments, ask reception for other options per your insurance and location, then research and seek word-of-mouth recommendations on the list provided to find a better fit.

For **Every** Provider, Including **Primary Care**

- Based on quality ratings that you and your clinic received, what can I expect in terms of both preventative and symptomatic care?
- How will my needs and wants for individualized care based on my background and lifestyle be incorporated into your treatment plans?
- How might my medical conditions affect my current and future lifestyles? What is your approach to treating these conditions?
- What preventative care services (i.e. vaccines, screenings, laboratory tests, etc.) do you recommend based on my background, gender,

race/ethnicity, medical history, current lifestyle, and plans (i.e. desired pregnancy, international travel, athletic level, etc.)?

- How can I ensure the medication I am taking and that you prescribe are safe to use based on my background and lifestyle?
- Why is this test and/or treatment plan being recommended, and what will the results tell us? What are the benefits and risks, and what are potential alternatives?
- If I disagree with or deny any treatment recommendations, what is your protocol?
- What community organizations do you partner with for additional patient resources pertaining to my medical risks, background, and lifestyle?
- What symptoms should I and my communities be vigilant about based on my personal health risks?
- How can we work together to ensure my health is stable or improved from one visit to the next?
- Can you tell me about conditions that are more prevalent in my community, and what you and your medical group are doing to reduce the risk of poor health outcomes from them?
- What preventative measures can be taken to improve my health outcomes for conditions I am at higher risk for based on family history, medical history, ethnicity, race, or gender?
- What additional screenings would you recommend?
- How often do you communicate with your patients, and via which methods (i.e. email, phone, patient portal)? Will I be able to reach you if I have an urgent matter?
- What experience do you have treating patients of a similar background and medical conditions to mine?
- How much interaction will I have with you versus your staff? Will you be the only doctor I see? Are there multiple providers within your medical group?
- Have you participated in implicit bias or cultural humility training? Are you comfortable discussing the impact of social and political determinants on my health outcomes?

- How might my culture and beliefs be incorporated into health care decisions?
- What specialized training do you have?
- How long does a typical appointment last? Do you offer telehealth appointments?
- How do you and this medical group handle routine, non-emergency questions?
- What insurance do you accept? Where can I find your billing and financial policies? Will you let me know beforehand how much services cost?
- Which tests are handled in the office, and which are performed elsewhere? How will you receive the results and when and with whom can I discuss them?
- What health care services in the community are made more affordable or accessible through your practice? What other patient resources are available to me?
- What languages do you speak, and are there trained medical interpreters available through your medical group?
- How do you ensure patients are informed of their rights and empowered to make choices that are right for them?
- How do you involve patients and their families in decision-making?
- Are there clinical trials available for my condition, do I qualify, and how can I learn more about them?
- What resources do you have available to help patients navigate the healthcare system and access necessary support services?
- Can we review what we discussed today to ensure both our understanding?

OB/GYN Specific

- Can you tell me about the differences in morbidity and mortality rates with pregnant patients and infants of color? What are you and this medical group doing to reduce the risks of poor health outcomes for both?
- How many patients of color have you had experience with, and what were both their and their babies' health outcomes?
- How will my personal birth plan decisions, including preferred method of delivery and pain management options, be incorporated into my delivery and postpartum care?
- What are your C-section and VBAC rates or that of this medical group?
- What is your pre-term birth rate, and what precautions will be taken to prevent that? If it happens, what is the protocol if I were to decline any aspect of the emergency birth plan?
- How long will I be able to carry my child before you want to induce my labor, and why?
- Are there midwives and nurse practitioners operating in your practice? Do you also have access to and recommendations for doulas or community health workers I can partner with?
- What are my personal risks for conditions such as gestational diabetes and preeclampsia, and how will they be managed both during and after my pregnancy if they were to happen?
- How will your office help to manage depressive symptoms if they were to happen either during or after the pregnancy?
- I've had a miscarriage or preterm loss. How does that change my care?
- What kind of care can I expect to receive both during and after a typical pregnancy? What procedures (i.e. ultrasounds, lab testing, etc.) are expected?
- How will my medical conditions affect both my health and my baby's during and after pregnancy? How are you and this medical group

equipped to handle these conditions throughout and after my pregnancy?

- What symptoms or occurrences are considered normal in pregnancy that, if severe, would still warrant an office visit?
- What is my role as a patient and birthing person in protecting both myself and my pregnancy via nutrition, managed weight gain, and safe activity?
- How can I learn if the medications I'm taking are safe for my pregnancy?
- What parenting groups or educational resources can your office connect me with to ensure greater health outcomes for both me and my baby?
- Do you offer group prenatal care or other supportive services? What postpartum resources can your office connect me with, including at-home support and lactation consultants, to ensure greater health outcomes for both me and my baby?

PEDIATRICIAN Specific

- What ages of children do you have experience treating? If family care, how many infants, toddlers, and children do you have experience treating?
- Do you have children? Would you make the same recommendations for them?
- If I have questions concerning my child's wellbeing, nutrition, sleep, or medical conditions, what is the best way to reach you, and how long does it take you to respond? Does your medical group provide after-hours and weekend staff?
- What hospital are you affiliated with, and do you visit newborns in the hospital after they're born? If not, when will you expect to see my newborn for the first time?
- What is the recommended immunization schedule, and how will you ensure you have them in stock for my child? Are you willing to alter the immunization schedule if requested? What risks are associated with specific vaccines?
- What is the well-child visit schedule, and how will it be enforced?

- How do you screen for social determinants of health, and are there factors within our lifestyle that create specific risks for my child? When and how will my child be tested for environmental exposures?
- How does your office handle sick visits or other urgent health matters? Do you have separate areas for sick and well-child visits?
- If my child is not meeting milestones, what resources can your office provide?
- How can I support my child's cognitive and emotional development at home and in the community?
- Which charts will you use to measure my baby's development, and why?
- How can I prevent common childhood illnesses and injuries?
- If my child gets sick, when should I bring them in?
- What are your philosophies on holistic care vs. medications for children?
- How can I ensure that the formula you are recommending for my newborn is safe?
- How much screen time is recommended for children, and what health challenges does it pose?
- What are your recommendations for safe sleep, and can you tell me more about the Safe Sleep 7 guidelines?
- Are you certified by or a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics?

SURGEON Specific

- Why are you recommending this surgery? How do you ensure your patients understand their surgical options, risks, and benefits?
- What will happen if I do not receive this surgery?
- How do you ensure that your surgical decisions are free from implicit or explicit bias?
- Are you aware of any specific health challenges or complications that disproportionately affect specific populations in your surgical specialty? How do you and your practice ensure all patients receive excellent care?
- How many times have you performed this procedure, and what is your success rate? How often do your patients experience complications?

- What kind of anesthesia will be used and how will I be monitored during? What are alternatives? If I request an alternative, will it be covered by insurance?
- How much pain is there after this type of surgery, and how will it be managed?
- Can this surgery be performed on an outpatient basis, and is that less expensive?
- Do you encourage patients to seek second opinions, and how do you facilitate that process?
- How do you ensure that your surgical plan is tailored to individual need and preference rather than a one-size-fits-all approach?
- How can I learn more about the specifics of this surgery, including pre- and post- requirements and expectations?
- What special preparations, tests, or screenings will I receive prior to and after this surgery, and why?
- What medications will be required for pre- or post-surgery and why?
- What symptoms should I watch for post-surgery?
- When can I expect to return to regular activities, including employment?
- What are the next steps if this surgery does not work?
- How will billing be handled between your office, center fees, and the anesthesiologist?
- Are you board certified? Are you a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons?

EMERGENCY MEDICINE Specific

- What is my suspected diagnosis, and what risks are you working to prevent? Where can I find more information about my condition?
- If I request to be taken to a specific hospital, what costs will be associated with that, and how will that impact my treatment?
- Are you willing and able to access emergency medical information on my person and/or mobile phone? Is there a portal in which to input this information for the hospital of my choice in case of emergency?
- What treatments, tests, medications, and/or procedures are you giving/planning to give to me and why? What are the potential benefits, risks, and side effects of each? What are alternatives?
- What can I expect in terms of pain and discomfort? What are my options for pain management?

- Is there a doctor or other medical professional with a similar background that I may speak with?
- Who is the doctor in charge of my care?
- Can I get a copy of my medical records during or after my treatment?
- If a guest cannot stay with me, how will you get in touch with them if something urgent happens?
- What is the plan for my discharge? What symptoms should I watch for afterwards? What follow-up care or appointments will be needed?

PSYCHIATRY Specific

- Can you tell me about your background in psychiatry?
- What is my diagnosis and how did you arrive at it?
- What coping strategies, external resources and active treatments do you typically recommend for this diagnosis and why?
- Why did you choose this medication and what can happen if I take it? What will happen if I discontinue use? Is it possible to become addicted to this medication, and if so, how can I prevent that?
- How much experience do you have in treating this condition with other patients of similar backgrounds?
- What training and resources do you and your practice have for issues that may arise related to my individual identities?
- What are your thoughts on the mental health impact of navigating bias, discrimination, and oppression?
- How will I know if I am getting better? What should I do if I feel worse?
- How often do you expect me to attend appointments, and how difficult are they to schedule?
- How do you see our cultural backgrounds influencing our communication and my treatment plan? Do you use a different approach when working with patients from different cultural backgrounds?
- What is your current knowledge of differences in behavioral health outcomes for patients of color?
- Will you work with and provide information to my other providers?
- Who do I contact in a crisis? What professionals and resources are available to me other than emergency services?