

# Health Net Clear Communication Program (CCP)

Fostering Clear Communication between Providers and Patients



In 2010, Health Net launched the Clear and Simple initiative which draws on plain language principles to help Health Net staff communicate more effectively with our members and ensure they understand the language of health and health care.

In 2016, Health Net expanded the Clear and Simple initiative and developed the Clear Communication Program (CCP). The aim of the CCP is to improve the patient experience by increasing clear communication skills between providers and patients. Research shows that effective provider communication is linked to increased diagnostic accuracy, adherence, patient and provider satisfaction, and patient safety.<sup>1</sup>

## Clear Communication Program toolkit

The CCP toolkit was developed for the patient and provider to use during patient provider encounters. The CCP toolkit consists of the *Provider Guide: How to Help Your Patients Understand Their Health and Health Care*. It is designed to efficiently educate and provide tools to providers to facilitate clear communication between provider and patient.

The Provider Guide highlights are:

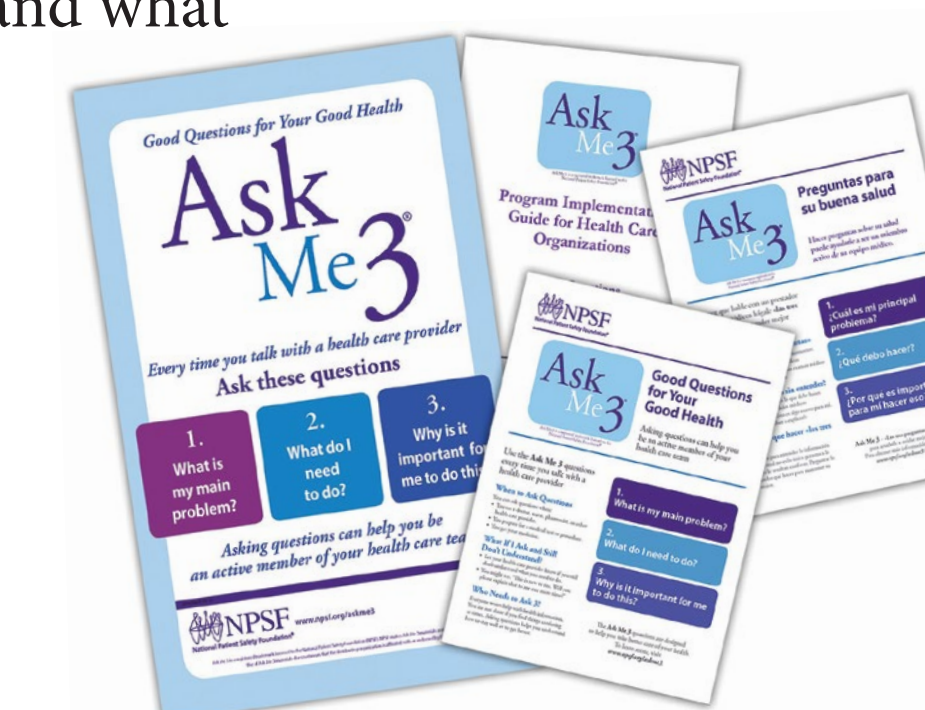
- 1 Health literacy and how low health literacy impacts patients' health care outcomes.
- 2 How to communicate in plain language with patients.
- 3 How to use Ask Me 3<sup>®</sup> during patient encounters.
- 4 How to use teach-back.<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Defining how culture impacts the health literacy of a patient.

The Health Net Cultural and Linguistic (C&L) Services Department partnered with the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) and co-branded their trademarked Ask Me 3<sup>3</sup> materials to develop the following components for the toolkit:

### English and Spanish Ask Me 3 brochure

The brochure, designed by health literacy experts, is to be used by patients with their physician during a medical encounter. The brochure "encourages patients and their families to ask three specific questions of their providers to better understand their health conditions and what they need to do to stay healthy." The three questions are:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?



### English and Spanish Ask Me 3 posters

The poster is for providers to display in their offices to introduce, promote and reinforce the use of the Ask Me 3 brochures.

### Health insurance terms flyer

The one-page flyer, in Spanish and English, is developed internally for patients. It provides plain language definitions for hard-to-understand health insurance terms.

## Phase one CCP pilot

Nine CCP toolkits were mailed to provider offices on October 7, 2016. The providers were emailed an 11-question survey, via SurveyMonkey. The pilot survey results were evaluated in November 2016.

### Outcomes/impact

Five of the nine providers (56 percent) completed the survey. Findings revealed that pilot providers viewed the CCP favorably. Physician specific feedback was:

- CCP needs a strong rollout to providers.
- Consider implementing the CCP into the care delivery flow process within clinical settings.
- Provide a non-branded version of the CCP toolkit to providers who are not allowed to have branded items in their reception areas.

## Phase two CCP full-scale

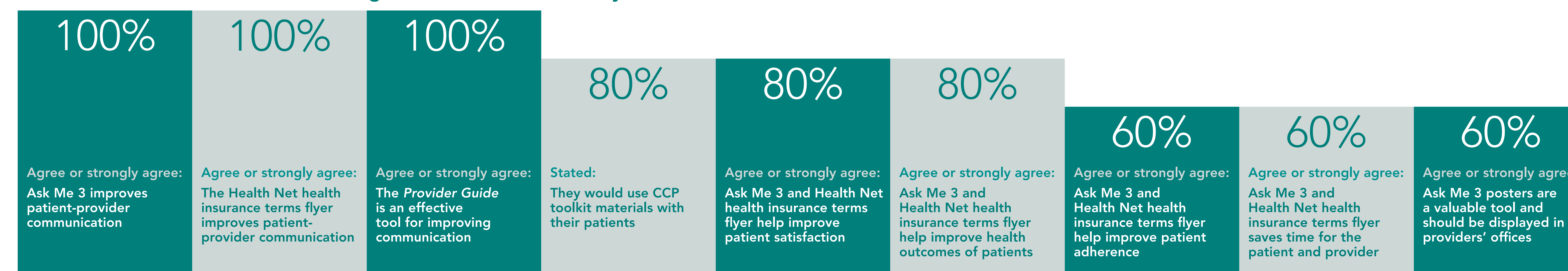
3,650 CCP toolkits were mailed to Health Net of California, Inc. commercial and exchange providers on January 10, 2017. The evaluation of the CCP full-scale study is currently in progress, with survey results expected to be analyzed by the beginning of May 2017.

## Implications for policy delivery and practice include:

- A complete evaluation of the phase two full-scale CCP. If the survey outcomes yield positive results, it is our goal to implement phases three and four of the CCP.
- Phase three: Offer on-site clear communication verbal training sessions to providers. The verbal training will:
  - Focus on methods specific to patient-centered care and will utilize and train providers on how to use Ask Me 3, teach-back and reflective listening skills.
  - Be delivered to targeted providers. Targeted providers are providers who are identified as experiencing communication barriers through grievances received by Health Net and/or high volume providers who exhibit low Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS<sup>®</sup>) outcomes on certain measures.
  - Be evaluated through pre- and post-tests. Providers who complete the verbal training will be evaluated to assess their level of understanding achieved on key concepts delivered.
- Phase four: Expand the delivery of the CCP toolkits to Health Net Medi-Cal and Cal MediConnect plan (Medicare-Medicaid) providers. Evaluation of phase four will be conducted in the same manner as phases one and two of the CCP.



## Health Net Clear Communication Program Pilot Provider Survey Results



<sup>1</sup>Institute for Healthcare Communications (2011, July). Impact of Communication in Healthcare. <http://healthcarecomm.org/about-us/impact-of-communication-in-healthcare/>.  
<sup>2</sup>Abrams MA, Rita S, Kurtz-Rossi S, Nielsen G. Unity Point Health. Always Use Teach-back! Toolkit. 2012. [www.teachbacktraining.org](http://www.teachbacktraining.org).  
<sup>3</sup>Ask Me 3 is a registered trademark licensed to the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF). Health Net is not affiliated with nor endorsed by NPSF. For more information about Ask Me 3 and to view a helpful video about how to use the questions, please visit [www.npsf.org/askme3](http://www.npsf.org/askme3).