

## What is Quality Health Care?

Quality health care is the kind of care patients want for themselves and their family members. It helps people stay well, get better when they're sick, or manage ongoing illnesses. It is:

- Getting care that works and that's safe.
- Being able to talk to your doctor and ask questions.
- Receiving the treatment YOU need for your health condition.
- Getting the proper medications, and understanding why you're taking them.
- Receiving the care you need at a time that it will do the most good.
- Being an engaged patient.

By being an engaged patient, you are involved in your health and act as an advocate for your body. Follow these steps to be an engaged patient.

- **Do your part to stay healthy.** Stay active, maintain a healthy weight, and do your best to eat the right foods. If you need support in this area, join the free I Can! Challenge ([www.ICanChallenge.com](http://www.ICanChallenge.com)).
- **Research the quality of care that doctors and hospitals provide using Aligning Forces for Quality's Community Checkup.** Learn whether practices and patients have good control of health indicators, such as blood pressure, LDL cholesterol levels, and other results relating to diabetes and heart disease. Visit [www.Aligning4HealthPA.org](http://www.Aligning4HealthPA.org).
- **Seek care as soon as you need it.** Delays in getting care can make health problems more serious, more costly and harder to treat.
- **Ask questions.** You need to understand the information you are given. Prepare for your next visit by taking questions to the doctor's office. Use the checklist available at [www.Aligning4HealthPA.org](http://www.Aligning4HealthPA.org) or provided by your doctor to help you get started.
- **Make sure you understand.** Did the doctor say a word you didn't understand? It's okay. Ask the doctor or health care provider to explain it in plain language, or ask for written instructions. It's also helpful to repeat back to the doctor what they said, but in your own words.

**Aligning Forces  
for Quality** | Improving Health & Health Care in Communities  
Across South Central Pennsylvania

An initiative of Healthy York County Coalition and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

- **Be involved with decisions that affect your health.** If your doctor recommends tests or treatment, ask for the information you need to make an informed decision.
- **Use your resources.** Aligning Forces for Quality – South Central PA has lots of tip sheets to help you get good quality care, and recommendations on how to stay healthy. Download resources at [www.Aligning4HealthPA.org](http://www.Aligning4HealthPA.org)!