WORKGROUP 2: CONSUMER SELECTION OF HEALTH SERVICES

Issue
Over 1/2 of primary care treatable ED patients are receiving care during primary care office hours.

Evidence
3/4 of patients do not consult a medical professional before choosing the ED; 3/4 of patients don’t consider urgent care as an alternative; 3/5 of those surveyed cite convenience as one of their top 3 factors for using the ED; 3/4 of those surveyed are seeking emergency care because of severe pain; cold symptoms (e.g., acute URI NOS, bronchitis, otitis media, viral infections) represent 1/7 of ED visits and 1/2 of the top 10 primary care treatable diagnoses in EDs.

Workgroup Goal
Educate 100,000 consumers about optimal ways of engaging in the health system. Primary care providers refer 500 fewer primary care treatable patients to the ED.

Potential Collaborative Initiatives
- Work with call centers regionally to work toward best practices, such as Kaiser’s Colorado “Call First” campaign and develop economies of scale to create efficiencies
- More widely distribute up-to-date information about primary care provider hours and locations to improve consumers’ ability to use primary care for treatable conditions
- Expand distribution of materials about appropriate use of the ED so that EDs are not overcrowded at sub-optimal times, endangering patients
- Follow up with patients who have an ED visit by informing them of primary care options, potentially increasing patient wellness
- Provide community-based educational sessions for targeted populations about how to engage in the health system in order to empower consumers
- Increase the use of social workers/patient navigators/case managers to improve patient engagement with the health system and reduce readmissions