



**Powering
Healthcare for
All of Us**



CARE CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2025

SHOULD YOU PURSUE A SECOND OPINION?

Committing to a treatment plan should be handled like any other major life decision – think making big purchases or choosing a college – it’s probably a good idea to consider multiple options. Considering more than one medical opinion will give you a well-rounded understanding of your health and ensure you are in a position to make an informed decision about your care.

Second opinions can result in both diagnostic and/or treatment plan changes. Diagnostic errors can result due to complex conditions or misinterpretation of test results. Changes to treatment plans may include alternative options or adjustments to medications and therapies. Those with complex or rare conditions may even benefit from cutting-edge treatments or clinical trials only offered as part of a treatment plan at specialized centers.

You may be wondering how often second opinions actually differ from that of the first doctor’s opinion. According to the Cleveland Clinic, their second opinions clinic leads to a diagnostic or treatment plan change in 67% of cases. A 2017 study showed that 21% of patients who received a second opinion at the Mayo Clinic came away with a completely new diagnosis, and 66% of patients’ diagnoses were refined or redefined as a result of their second opinions.

There are particular scenarios in which second opinions are more vital. For example, you may want to pursue a second opinion if you are diagnosed with cancer or if your doctor’s treatment plan recommends surgery. Other situations in which you may want to seek out a second opinion include if you receive an unclear diagnosis or if the patient is your child.

When pursuing a second opinion, no referral is needed. Be sure to collect all relevant medical records such as imaging or bloodwork results, biopsy results, surgery reports, hospital discharge reports, and information regarding any drugs or supplements you take. You want the second doctor to have a complete picture



of your health before making any diagnoses or recommending a plan of treatment.

You might be hesitant to seek out a second opinion. Does it mean you're doubting your doctor? Will your doctor be offended? Your doctor wants what is best for you and your health, and that is finding a care team that you trust and a diagnosis and treatment plan you are comfortable with.

Itemized List of Information Needed for a Second Opinion

1. Personal & Insurance Information

- Full legal name
- Date of birth
- Contact information (phone, email, mailing address)
- Insurance card (front and back)
- Policyholder name and date of birth (if different)
- Referral or prior authorization number (if required by insurance)



2. Medical Records

Most recent and relevant documentation:

- Office visit notes from treating provider(s)
- Diagnosis documentation
- Treatment plan or recommendations
- Hospital discharge summary (if applicable)
- Surgical or procedure notes (if applicable)
- Medication list (current and past relevant medications)
- Allergy list
- Immunization record (if relevant)



3. Imaging & Diagnostic Results

- Radiology reports (MRI, CT, X-ray, ultrasound, etc.)
- Copies of actual images (CD, USB, or digital upload link)
- Lab test results (bloodwork, cultures, biomarkers)
- Pathology reports (biopsy, cytology)
- Cardiac testing (EKG, echocardiogram, stress test)
- Any specialty testing results relevant to the condition



4. Provider Information

- Name and specialty of current treating provider
- Clinic or hospital name
- Provider's contact information (phone and fax number)
- Medical record department contact details (optional but helpful)

5. Administrative Documents

- Signed Authorization for Release of Health Information (medical records release form)
- Designation of Representative form (if someone is helping with the process)
- Prior authorization request or approval letters
- Second opinion request form (if the new provider or hospital requires one)



6. Patient's Personal Summary (optional but helpful)

- Brief description of symptoms
- Timeline of condition or illness
- Previous treatments and their outcomes
- Specific questions or concerns for the second opinion provider
- Goals or expectations for the second opinion

Professional Medical Organizations

These organizations provide consumer-friendly guides on second opinions, patient rights, and questions to ask.

- **American Medical Association (AMA)**
 - Your right to seek second opinions
 - How to communicate with your doctor about it
- **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**
 - Guides on choosing specialists
 - Patient checklists for medical decision-making
- **American Cancer Society (ACS)** (not only for cancer; helpful for general second-opinion information)
 - How to request a second opinion
 - Preparing medical history and imaging



Agency for Healthcare
Research and Quality



WELLNESS TIP!

RESOLUTIONS IN THE NEW YEAR

When thinking of New Year's Resolutions, it's important to set realistic, attainable goals. Focus on short-term, realistic goals to get to long-term objectives. Creating resolutions that are overly ambitious or "big" can lead to disappointment and frustration, which may adversely affect your mental health. Instead, focus on setting small, manageable goals.

For instance, rather than aiming to "eliminate stress", consider incorporating daily mindfulness practices or allocating specific weekly time for self-care activities.

Source: [NIH](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

FMCP RESOURCES

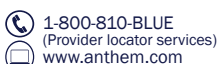
Visit www.nifmcp.com/resources to access your Plan documents and member forms in both English and Spanish. You can also read Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and find contact information for our vendor partners, plus PDF versions of our *Care Connection* newsletter – and more!

Our mobile-responsive website was designed with your convenience in mind.



IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

PPO - Anthem



Rx Drugs - SavRx



Dental - Delta Dental



Vision - VSP



NECA/IBEW Family Medical Care Plan

1-877-937-9602

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