Background/Significance: There is a correlation between lower health literacy, increased use of health care, and increased cost of health care (IOM, 2004). According to anecdotal evidence, patients ask for clarification regarding discharge instructions, treatment plans, and/or medication administration despite instructions from nurses and pharmacists. Patients have difficulty understanding medical jargon and often need clarification regarding plans of care and medication dosages. An innovative communication tool, Ask 4 Facts, has been developed to improve nurse and patient communication and ultimately patient health outcomes.

Purpose: Investigate RNs’ perceptions of Ask 4 Facts as part of the development and implementation of this communication tool.

Framework: Iowa Model of Evidence-Based Practice to Promote Quality Care.

Sample/Setting: Midwest academic Federal medical center; 40 direct care RNs from different practice settings participated.

Method/Design: A qualitative descriptive design was used and the study was approved by the IRB. An investigator-developed questionnaire was used to solicit opinions and advice about the Ask 4 Facts tool. A packet including an Information Sheet, Questionnaire, Ask 4 Facts tool, and Thank You note was distributed at nursing shared governance, education, and unit meetings. RNs completed the questionnaire anonymously and returned it via fax or interoffice mail to a research team member. Data were analyzed using content analysis.

Findings: Of the nurse participants, 80% of RN’s responded that Ask 4 Facts would be helpful in improving communication with clients, 15% responded that it may help, and 5% responded that the tool would not help; 68% offered suggestions to improve the tool.

Conclusions/Implications: Communication has a direct impact on Veteran medical care and health outcomes. Investigating health care providers’ and patients’ perceptions of this tool before it is implemented will identify any needed refinements to the tool and facilitate successful implementation of Ask 4 Facts. Most nurse participants perceived the Ask 4 Facts tool as helpful for improving communication with patients in creating and maintaining Veteran-centered care or plans of care. In addition, improvements to the tool have been identified and refinements will be made prior to facilitation to ensure successful implementation of Ask 4 Facts.