



Choose the Right Hospital

A TOOLKIT TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



Background on Hospital Compare

The Hospital Compare website, which is hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is a national database of most U.S. hospitals caring for patients with acute and chronic illness. It was developed through multi-stakeholder input from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Health and Human Services and members of the Hospital Quality Alliance. The data presented on this website were submitted voluntarily by participating hospitals.

Hospital Compare presents four different groups of measures:

Hospital Process of Care Measures

A process measure shows how often a hospital gives the recommended treatment known to get the best results for the patient. The measures are based on scientific evidence. The process of care measures focus on five areas: heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, surgical care and asthma care for children.

Hospital Outcome of Care Measures

The outcome of care measures focus on hospitals' 30-day risk-adjusted death rates and readmission rates for heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia compared to the U.S. national rate. For each hospital, Hospital Compare reports whether a hospital's risk-adjusted death rate and readmission rate is lower (better) than the U.S. national rate, about the same as the U.S. national rate, or higher (worse) than the U.S. national rate, given how sick the patients were when they were admitted to the hospital.

Survey of Patients' Hospital Experiences

Hospital Compare provides information about patient's perceptions of their hospital experience as obtained from the HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) survey, a national, standardized, publicly reported survey of patients' perceptions of hospital care. HCAHPS includes composite measures in six domains: (1) communication with nurses; (2) communication with doctors; (3) communication about medicines; (4) responsiveness of hospital staff; (5) discharge information; and (6) pain management. Because each of the items in the survey has been tested extensively, the results can be compared across hospitals. HCAHPS was developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), an agency in the federal government. In developing the assessment tool, AHRQ asked many private-sector experts, including the Business Group, to advise them.

Medicare Payment and Volume

The Hospital Compare website includes limited information on average Medicare payments to hospitals for certain conditions or procedures. It also provides information on the number of Medicare patients treated at each hospital for a specific condition.