



Transparency, Quality, Safety and Value ... WI Hospitals Leading the Way

Background

Over the past several years Wisconsin lawmakers, employers and patients have called upon health care providers to be more “transparent” about cost and quality and focus resources on improving efficiency, outcomes and value. Wisconsin hospitals continue to respond to that call. In fact, we lead the nation with innovative public and online reporting of quality, safety and cost information and some of the highest ranked health care quality in the country. WHA’s PricePoint and CheckPoint are two nationally recognized examples.

Since 2005, the WHA Information Center has been collecting and disseminating (as mandated in WI Stats Ch. 153) data about charges and services provided by Wisconsin hospitals through PricePoint (www.wipricepoint.org). Here, consumers can find and compare facility-specific charge information on all inpatient and many outpatient hospital services. Interest in PricePoint grows and recognition of its validity continues to increase as it is now licensed in 18 other states.

Wisconsin hospitals are also committed to sharing information about the quality and safety of hospital services through WHA’s CheckPoint website (www.wicheckpoint.org). Through CheckPoint, the public can compare hospital performance on nearly 100 measures, including mortality. Consumers can use this information to make informed decisions and learn what constitutes high quality care.

Health Care Quality and Value

Wisconsin hospitals continuously strive to improve quality of care as evidenced by Wisconsin’s 2009 **top ranking among all 50 states** by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). In AHRQ’s *National Healthcare Quality Report*, Wisconsin has consistently ranked at or near the top, also scoring first in 2007 and second in 2008. This score is based on 149 measures that AHRQ used to evaluate health care performance.

AHRQ’s Best Performing States (Top 5)

Wisconsin

Minnesota

Massachusetts

New Hampshire

Michigan

The respected Dartmouth *Atlas* also ranks Wisconsin very high nationally in the value of care provided for Medicare patients. For example, using 2006 inflation-adjusted numbers, Medicare spent just over \$5,800 on the average beneficiary in La Crosse compared to \$16,300 per beneficiary in Miami. The studies show that integrated delivery system models, like those used by many Wisconsin providers, could actually save Medicare upwards of \$100 billion a year.

Wisconsin hospitals have invested substantial resources to improve the care they provide. Over the past three years, Wisconsin hospitals have participated in the following learning collaboratives:

- Rural Hospital Surgical Care Improvement Project
- Rural Hospital Stroke Improvement Project

(over)

- Pressure Ulcer Reduction Project
- Blood Stream Infection Prevention Project

By participating in these projects, hospitals can be sure that they are using interventions supported by research and share information that accelerates their improvement process.

Transparency: Quality & Patient Safety Information

Launched in 2004, WHA's CheckPoint was the first voluntary hospital quality reporting initiative in the country. CheckPoint is designed to meet the growing consumer need for information on the quality of care provided in their local hospitals. Consumers, health care purchasers and hospitals are able to view quality, safety and service information on nearly **every Wisconsin hospital**.

Perhaps even more important, CheckPoint has **produced results** by helping Wisconsin hospitals improve the care they provide. Over time, new information is added to CheckPoint. In 2010, measures relating to births and stroke care will be available. CheckPoint is living up to its promise of providing useful information and improving hospital care.

Transparency: Pricing Information

WHA's consumer-friendly PricePoint website allows users to easily access and compare charge information on any type of hospitalization and selected outpatient procedures in any hospital or Medicare-certified ambulatory surgery center in Wisconsin. The site also provides aggregate "discount" information for each hospital for private insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.

PricePoint was created without a legislative mandate and is also constantly evolving so consumers, employers and insurers have the most useful information for making health care decisions. Recently added and planned upgrades include:

- Charges for Emergency Department and Urgent Care services
- Charges for Wisconsin's 25 most common hospitalizations by hospital
- Expanding the 'Top 25' list to the 'Top 75' for inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures (late 2010)
- Expanding the number of outpatient services reported through PricePoint (late 2010)

PricePoint has become the national model for posting hospital prices and other important information. Eighteen other states are now licensed to use PricePoint

Key Points

- Led by our hospitals, the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) ranked the quality of Wisconsin's health care first in the nation in 2007 and 2009, and second only to Minnesota in 2008.
- Wisconsin hospitals are dedicated to improvement through sharing what they have learned.
- Wisconsin hospitals are shown to provide some of the highest value care in the country.
- Wisconsin hospitals and WHA are in the forefront nationally with healthcare transparency initiatives.

WHA Position

Quality health care – doing the right thing at the right time in the right setting – leads to the best possible results and lowers costs. Wisconsin hospitals are dedicated to improving their care through transparency and shared learning. These principles are the foundations for Wisconsin's top ratings in national reports and reflect the ongoing commitment of providers to deliver the best care possible to their patients.