

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.

NEWS

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WHA Report Shows Hospitals Continue to Improve Quality, Reduce Infections, Increase Value

Wisconsin hospitals reduced some infections by more than 60 percent; Statewide hospitals look to decrease sepsis deaths

MADISON (March 3, 2016) ----- Wisconsin hospitals' efforts to improve quality are resulting in better patient care, lowering health care costs and saving lives.

[A new report](#) from the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) documents the progress that hospitals are making in reducing infections, preventing falls and decreasing hospital readmissions.

Data collected by the WHA from nearly 100 community hospitals the Association quality improvement team has worked with over the past four years shows they have reduced catheter-associated urinary tract (CAUTI) infections 66 percent, reduced falls with injury 26 percent, and decreased sepsis mortality 16 percent.

"Wisconsin hospitals are extremely collaborative in sharing best practices that can improve outcomes and save lives," according to Kelly Court, WHA chief quality officer. "We have made steady progress in our determination to increase quality in our hospitals, but we know we still have a long way to go to deliver the high standard of care that we expect of ourselves with every single patient."

More than 1,000 patients die of sepsis in Wisconsin hospitals each year. In 2016, WHA and its member hospitals are working together to reduce sepsis mortality through better early detection in the emergency department and rapid aggressive treatment.

When patients are discharged from the hospital, they do not expect to return. The readmission rate in Wisconsin is 6.8 percent, which is lower than the national benchmark of 8 percent; however, hospitals are committed to driving this rate even lower.

The reason why a patient is readmitted to the hospital can be very complicated. Reducing readmissions requires hospitals to improve internal care processes, increase patient and family engagement in the

patient's care, and encourage families to work closely with agencies and health care providers who help care for patients after they leave the hospital.

"Hospitals are working with both the patient and the family to ensure they have a good understanding of the post-discharge care plan, understand the home care instructions, and know what the resources are in the community that can help the patient transition to a new environment, whether that is home or to a skilled nursing facility," according to Court. "Patients and family members are also encouraged to contact their physician with any concerns or questions so problems can be resolved while the patient is at home."

Paying for Value

Wisconsin hospitals and health systems are ranked among the highest performing in the nation according to the Commonwealth Fund 2015 Scorecard on Healthcare Performance. The Commonwealth scorecard rated Wisconsin 11th best in the country and in the top quartile across 42 measures related to health care delivery.

That consistent high performance has enabled Wisconsin to embrace the changes in the health care payment environment, as well. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) hospital value-based purchasing (VBP) program is designed to promote better clinical outcomes for hospital patients, improve their experience of care during hospital stays and promote efficient use of resources by providing bonus payments to high-performing hospitals.

Wisconsin was the 4th best performing state in the CMS VBP program. Wisconsin hospitals hard work to improve quality led to 52 –which is 80 percent- of the 65 eligible hospitals being eligible for an incentive payment.

High-Quality, High-Value Health Care: A Wisconsin Tradition

Wisconsin hospitals and health systems have embraced quality improvement as a key strategy in improving patient care and reducing costs to patients, employers and other purchasers of health care.

"High-quality, high-value health care is what sets us apart from many other states, and it is a key asset to the economic development of every community in our state," according to WHA President/CEO Eric Borgerding. "The pursuit of clinical excellence, guided by highly-skilled and caring health care professionals. Our drive to improve quality and patient care will not end. Hospitals and health systems here will continue to direct their resources to set new standards of excellence in clinical performance."

Wisconsin hospitals publicly report data and information related to the quality of care they provide on www.WiCheckPoint.org. This type of reporting is well-known to drive improvement and encourage collaboration among providers.

WiCheckPoint.org is a source of information on infections, birth information, heart and stroke-related care, mortality, patient satisfaction and many other topics. Today, 128 hospitals report more than 60 quality measures on the site. Unlike some other state and federal reporting sites, in Wisconsin, 57 critical access hospitals participate in CheckPoint, making it one of the more complete sources of information on hospital quality in the nation.