

**Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.**



Mary Kay Grasmick, WHA - 608-274-1820, 575-7516

# **Wisconsin Health Care Ranks Second Highest in Nation**

*Wisconsin follows only New Hampshire in overall performance*

**MADISON (May 2, 2015)** ---- Wisconsin is the second most highly-rated state in the country based on the quality of its health care according to the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). Wisconsin had the second best overall health care quality measure score among all 50 states, second only to New Hampshire, based on more than 200 measures that AHRQ used to evaluate health care performance. The rankings are posted here:

<http://nhqrnet.ahrq.gov/inhqrdr/state/select>

Wisconsin ranked third highest last year behind Minnesota and Massachusetts and has consistently placed at or near the top of AHRQ's ranking since 2005.

"Compared to all states, for the most recent data year, the performance for all Wisconsin measures is in the strong range," AHRQ noted. The AHRQ quality measures are compared to achievable benchmarks, which are derived from the top-performing states. AHRQ measures health care quality in three different contexts: by types of care (such as preventive, acute, or chronic care), by settings of care (such as hospitals, nursing homes, home health or hospice), and care by clinical area (such as care for patients with cancer or respiratory diseases).

Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) President/CEO Eric Borgerding said Wisconsin's health care leaders and caregivers are committed to delivering the highest standards of patient care and to improving quality across the state in both rural and urban areas.

"The AHRQ rankings are national validation of what we know here; Wisconsin's local and regional health systems are delivering some of the best care in the country," Borgerding said. "Across the continuum of care, in rural and urban settings, we are continuing to perform well, while always knowing we can do more. It is that combination of performance and commitment to be better that makes Wisconsin a perennial leader."

Wisconsin hospitals scored extremely well and much higher than national benchmarks on measures related to the use of electronic health records (EHR). Wisconsin hospitals and health systems were early adopters of and continue to make significant investments in EHR technology. The rankings are an indication that health care professionals are using EHR to improve communications with one another and with their patients. EHRs and the ability to share health information electronically helps providers deliver higher quality and safer care for patients by enabling quick access to patient records for more coordinated, efficient care.

The fact that Wisconsin has maintained a top ranking in the AHRQ measures for nearly a decade demonstrates a sustained commitment to achieving better quality and higher value health care, something WHA believes is as important as the actual rankings themselves.

"While these recent results are more welcome news, it is that sustained high performance that is most noteworthy," Borgerding said. "Wisconsin's caregivers and our hospital and health system leaders are showing a long-term commitment to the pursuit of better, more efficiently delivered care. That is good news for our patients and Wisconsin's employers. It sets us apart and it is a real asset and advantage for our state."

In a recent speaking engagement in Madison, Gov. Scott Walker touted Wisconsin's high-quality, high-value health care as an economic development asset that deserves global recognition.

"All across the state of Wisconsin, there's access to really remarkably high quality health care, some of the best not just in the country, but in the world, and you can't put a premium on that," according to Walker. "Sometimes we take it for granted because we don't have to travel to another state or another region...It is a key element in the quality of life that we have in the state of Wisconsin."

AHRQ's *State Snapshots* Web tool was launched in 2005. It is an application that helps state health leaders, researchers, consumers, and others understand the status of health care quality in individual states, including each state's strengths and weaknesses.

**END**

### **Top Ten States\* (and their scores)**

**\*AHRQ data, "State Snapshots"**

New Hampshire	67.24
Wisconsin	66.06
Maine	64.55
Massachusetts	63.0
Minnesota	61.88
Iowa	60.31
Rhode Island	59.68
Delaware	58.91
South Dakota	58.01
Vermont	57.44