

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.



NEWS

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More than 100 Wisconsin Hospitals to Share Quality, Safety Information ***CheckPointSM Tells Consumers What to Expect from Health Care Providers***

Madison (October 15, 2003) ----- More than 100 Wisconsin hospitals have volunteered to provide information on the quality and safety of care that they provide in their communities. The hospitals, which are responsible for providing care to more than 95% of the patients who are admitted to a hospital in Wisconsin every year, are participating in a quality initiative called, CheckPointSM, initiated by the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA).

“This initiative is a proactive response to growing public interest in measuring patient quality and safety,” according to WHA President Steve Brenton. “This level of participation clearly demonstrates that Wisconsin hospitals place a high priority on providing information that will help people become more informed consumers of health care.”

The CheckPoint program will give consumers and employers reliable, valid data on 5 safety goals and 10 key clinical interventions that medical experts agree should be taken to treat heart attacks, heart failure and pneumonia. For example, one measure will report how frequently an aspirin is administered to a patient experiencing a heart attack within 24 hours of admission. This is one way to thin the blood and reduce stress on the heart.

“An important aspect of the CheckPoint program is to educate the public on the type of interventions they should expect from their providers and why these interventions are important to them,” according to Dana Richardson, RN, WHA’s vice president of quality.

Brenton said new measures will be added on a regular basis. He explained that the first 10 measures were chosen because they include data on the three main causes of hospitalization: pneumonia, heart attack, and congestive heart failure.

“By giving consumers information about these three conditions, we can help improve their overall health status,” according to Brenton. “This is an evolving science; CheckPoint is not meant to be a final product, rather it is a first step to share measurements that are scientifically proven to produce quality outcomes.”

Charles Shabino, MD, chief medical officer at Community Health Care, Inc., Wausau, is a member of the Wisconsin Quality Steering Committee that guides the WHA quality initiatives. He said the task force he co-chaired with Ken Buser, president and CEO, All Saints Healthcare System, Racine, considered what the best data are for measuring the quality of care in hospitals.

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"We wanted to ensure that our public report includes measures that are meaningful to consumers, so we are measuring processes proven to positively influence the outcome of care," Shabino said. "By voluntarily reporting important data to the public, it increases public awareness on what to look for in a hospital, and hospitals will continue to seek ever higher levels of quality."

Shabino pointed out that one of the important aspects of the program, in addition to providing information to the public, is that data will be shared among over 100 hospitals in Wisconsin that can be used for their own internal quality improvement programs.

"If there is a practice that is proven to improve quality in one setting, through CheckPoint, it will be shared with other hospitals and ultimately, increase the quality of care state wide," Shabino added.

During a recent visit to Wisconsin, Becky Cherney, president of the Central Florida Health Care Coalition, one of the largest employer health coalitions in the country, applauded the CheckPoint program because of its benchmarking capabilities. "We view every effort to measure anything as critical. One of our biggest obstacles is to not have measurements to know if the health care we are purchasing is improving," Cherney said. "We think benchmarks are gold."

James Buchen, vice president, government relations, of the largest business representation group in Wisconsin, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, confirmed that employers collect data on themselves to improve quality, and they seek information from those who provide services to their employees, as well.

"CheckPoint will give Wisconsin businesses access to information they need to help them and their employees make good health care purchasing decisions by providing comparative data on both cost and quality. Employers need to become better informed consumers because the most expensive health care is poor quality health care," according to Buchen.

The development of the CheckPoint program and other quality initiatives is guided by the Wisconsin Quality Steering Committee, a multidisciplinary group that includes representatives from industry, health plans, public policy and research organizations, the Wisconsin Medical Society, medical clinics and hospitals.

CheckPoint information will be displayed on a public Web site that is now under development and scheduled to be operational early in 2004.

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Attached:

- 1. List of participating hospitals** (2 pages)
- 2. Map: Participating Hospitals** (1 page)
- 3. Roster: Wisconsin Quality Steering Committee** (1 page)
- 4. Quotes: Elected Officials, Employers, Quality Experts Comment** (2 pages)