

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.

NEWS



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Wisconsin Ranks Among Top States in Hospital Quality, Safety

MADISON (March 20, 2007) ----- Wisconsin ranks among the top states in the nation on hospital care associated with pneumonia, heart attacks and heart failure according to a report released today by the Joint Commission (www.jointcommission.org). The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits nearly 15,000 health care organizations across the nation. The report details the performance of accredited hospitals against standardized national performance measures and the Joint Commission's National Patient Safety Goals.

Three years ago, the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) launched CheckPoint (www.wicheckpoint.org), becoming one of the first states in the country to publicly report hospital quality and safety information. CheckPoint initially had 10 quality and 5 safety measures and 121, or 96 percent of the hospitals participating in the program. Now, 99 percent of the hospitals in Wisconsin participate in CheckPoint and by the end of 2007, CheckPoint will report more than 70 measures on its Web site.

Since December 2004, Wisconsin hospitals have either maintained an already high level of compliance with a standard of care, or effected double-digit improvement increases. For example, the statewide average of the percent of hospitalized pneumonia patients who receive a vaccination to prevent a future onset of pneumonia has gone from 46 percent in December 2004 to 77 percent in December 2006, a 64 percent increase across all hospitals. Smoking cessation counseling for pneumonia patients went from 61 percent to 86 percent--a 41 percent increase across all hospitals in the state.

Of the 19 medical and error prevention measures currently reported in the WHA CheckPoint Web site, the statewide average compliance score is greater than 90 percent for 11 of the 19 medical and error prevention measures.

Dana Richardson, WHA's vice president of quality, said, "It is well known that you improve what you measure. In several quality improvement areas reported in CheckPoint, we saw double digit increases which demonstrate improvement in the safety and quality of the care that we provide in our hospitals. Improvement like that is only possible when physicians and hospital staff commit to standardizing and refining processes that lead to better patient outcomes."

Richardson said improvement this significant requires coordination across many hospital departments and disciplines. Wisconsin hospitals have used many approaches including focused quality improvement efforts, multi-hospital collaboratives, and participation in national campaigns.

WHA Senior Medical Advisor Charles Shabino, MD, said CheckPoint gives patients an opportunity to partner with their physicians in a new way by asking questions about the quality and safety of their care.

“CheckPoint creates a new environment of sharing information that will be helpful to patients, health care organizations, and businesses,” according to Shabino.

While health care is delivered in a more competitive environment these days, Shabino said Checkpoint offers a way for hospitals to collaborate and benchmark successes, learning best practices from one another.

“Through CheckPoint, all hospitals share their progress towards implementing practices that research demonstrates improves outcomes and increase safety, which will raise the level of health care quality statewide,” Shabino added.

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The Joint Commission evaluates and accredits nearly 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. An independent, not-for-profit organization, The Joint Commission is the nation’s predominant standards-setting and accrediting body in health care. Since 1951, The Joint Commission has maintained state-of-the-art standards that focus on improving the quality and safety of care provided by health care organizations. The Joint Commission’s comprehensive accreditation process evaluates an organization’s compliance with these standards and other accreditation requirements.