

# News Release



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## **121 Wisconsin Hospitals Report Quality, Safety Information** CheckPoint Among Most Promising Hospital Reporting Programs in Nation

*Find it at <http://www.wicheckpoint.org>*

**MILWAUKEE (March 30, 2004)**-----Starting today, information about the quality and safety of care in Wisconsin hospitals is only a click away. CheckPoint will give consumers and employers reliable, valid data on 5 error prevention goals and 10 key clinical interventions that medical experts agree should be taken to treat heart attacks, heart failure and pneumonia, the three most common causes of hospitalization in Wisconsin.

The Web site, <http://www.wicheckpoint.org>, tells consumers how often hospitals delivered this, and other care that is scientifically shown to improve outcomes.

The error prevention information measures Wisconsin hospitals' progress in meeting national patient safety goals. These goals are related to surgical processes, medication administration, and equipment that is used in patient care areas.

The 121 hospitals, 96% of the hospitals in the state, which are voluntarily reporting to CheckPoint, are responsible for 99% of all hospital admissions in Wisconsin.

Initiated by the Wisconsin Hospital Association, CheckPoint is a comprehensive source of quality and safety information on Wisconsin hospitals. According to WHA President Steve Brenton, hospitals want to be accountable for the quality of care they provide and CheckPoint provides a platform that standardizes how this important data is collected, reported, and now, published for the first time in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin hospitals are taking a step forward in their communities to more actively involve people in decisions affecting their health by providing ready access to current, valid information. A move that did not go unnoticed by Governor Jim Doyle.

"Wisconsin is a pioneer in health care quality," Governor Doyle said. "From the businesses and providers who are working together to improve quality of care ... to the disease management initiatives underway at our clinics ... to the life saving technologies being developed by Wisconsin companies, we're working hard to make sure our health care facilities and hospitals remain the envy of the nation. I applaud the Wisconsin Hospital Association's dedication to providing valid, reliable measures of health care quality through their 'CheckPoint' Initiative. Their efforts will help health care facilities throughout the state better provide for their patients."

State legislators acknowledged the initiative Wisconsin hospitals have taken to launch a program that provides vital information for consumers.

"I applaud this initiative by Wisconsin's hospitals," said Curt Gielow (R-Mequon) vice chair of the Assembly Health Committee. "It will help consumers and employers by giving them information tools to make better decisions about their own health care. CheckPoint is a great example of the innovation that can occur in the private sector without government intervention -- it is a model for quality improvement in health care."

Rep. Sheldon Wasserman, MD (D-Milwaukee) also commented.

"What CheckPoint does is provide a standard method to measure safety practices. This is the first step in improving upon and providing the safest level of patient care possible," said Wasserman who serves on the Assembly Health Committee.

This initial report is just a start, according to Brenton. The data will be refreshed every three months. Each time, more information will be added to the report. In September, additional measures will be added. A feedback survey built into the Web site will be one source of input to an expert committee that evaluates and selects new measures.

James Buchen, vice president at Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce believes access to quality and safety data will have a fundamental influence on the health care delivery system.

"CheckPoint is another giant step forward in the evolution of publicly available health care information," said Buchen. "Information is key to improving not only the quality of care, but in changing the way employers and consumers think about, and ultimately use, the health care system. We are very encouraged by this effort."

Charles Shabino, MD, WHA chairman of the board, and medical director at Community Health Care in Wausau, said CheckPoint will give patients an opportunity to partner with their physicians in a new way, ask questions about quality and safety of their care.

"CheckPoint creates a new environment of sharing of 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 will share practices that have been shown to improve quality and increase safety, which will raise the level of health care quality statewide," Shabino added.

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

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Additional Comments from Employers in Milwaukee:

**Orvid “Dick” Tillmar, CEO, TE Brennan Company, co-chair, Metro Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce Blueprint Health Care Team**

It's easy for me to support CheckPoint, because this is exactly the kind of thing that consumers and employers need. In my line of work, I'm seeing employers change the structure of their benefit plans, and with that, there is more decision-making by employees. With these new consumer-driven plans, employees need a tool to help them make informed choices based on credible information. That's what CheckPoint gives us. I think it will be a great resource for people trying to figure out what hospital they want to go to...and for employers who are deciding which hospitals to include in their benefit plan

**Mike Mahoney, President, Park Bank, co-chair, MMAC Blueprint Health Care Team**

Milwaukee has seen plenty of task forces and committees on health care costs and one of the things they all conclude is that we need more information about the quality that we're buying with our health care dollar. It needs to be unbiased and give us apples-to-apples comparisons of the care we can expect from different hospitals. This is something we've been asking for, and I applaud the hospitals for stepping forth and presenting this information. It isn't comprehensive now, but I'm convinced that CheckPoint will be expanding over time, and this is really a step in the right direction.

**Tim Sheehy, President of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce:**

The Milwaukee business community has been calling for an easier way to get quality information on hospitals, and it's great to see hospitals stepping up to the plate and holding themselves accountable.

**John Bremer, Chief Operating Officer, Northwestern Mutual:**

Employers need to be able to make choices based on cost and quality, and this goes a long way toward helping them access information easily. With all the measures of quality out there, CheckPoint is particularly valuable since it is based on measures that are proven by research to lead to the best outcomes in care. It's a good start, and I'm glad to know it will be expanded over time.