

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>

WAUSAU (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, who 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."

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.

Rural hospitals have not always had the data on hand that was needed to meet statistical requirements for public reporting, according to Tim Size, executive director of the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative.

“Data collection costs money and most rural hospitals have focused data collection on internal quality improvement and their accreditation requirements. CheckPoint places new demands on us and we are up to the challenge,” according to Size.

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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