

Wisconsin Hospital Association, Inc.



## NEWS

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### **Hospital Public Reporting Reaches Two Year Mark in Wisconsin** *New information added as consumer need for data increases*

[www.wicheckpoint.org](http://www.wicheckpoint.org)

**MADISON (March 30, 2006)** --- It started with a simple idea...create an on-line resource that will help people seeking to learn more about the care they should expect to receive in a Wisconsin hospital. Two years later, every Wisconsin hospital is participating in the Wisconsin Hospital Association's CheckPoint program ([www.wicheckpoint.org](http://www.wicheckpoint.org)).

The CheckPoint program was designed to address the growing demand that health care purchasers and consumers have for information that is helpful as they seek to learn more about their health care needs and expected treatment. More than 80 percent of those who have Internet access report that they have searched for health-related information and, of those, nearly 30 percent have looked for information on a particular doctor or hospital, according to statistics gathered by the **Pew Internet & American Life Project**.

CheckPoint provides consumers with reliable information on five error prevention goals and 14 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. Also included in CheckPoint are eight interventions that are known to help prevent surgical infections. And more measures will be added soon.

### **Unsafe Practices Can Be Eliminated**

A recent national report claimed that patients are only receiving 55 percent of the care that research has shown they should be given for their condition. WHA's Dana Richardson, vice president for quality initiatives, said that consumers don't need to look any farther than CheckPoint to see that Wisconsin hospitals are performing **"well above the national average in providing recommended care to patients."**

"In fact, we know that **we have eliminated two unsafe practices statewide** by removing concentrated electrolytes from patient care areas, and by using only free-flow protected intravenous pumps in all hospitals," Richardson added. "Both of those practices were targeted in CheckPoint."

While public information is important to consumers as they navigate the health care system, physicians and hospitals have found public information equally as important for their continuous internal improvement efforts. All measures reported in CheckPoint have shown improvement, but two areas in particular have shown dramatic progress--pneumonia vaccination and smoking cessation counseling.

"Although vaccinations have historically been provided in community settings, hospitals are now making it a priority to vaccinate high risk patients who come into the hospital with pneumonia,"

according to Richardson. "Since we started measuring how many patients receive smoking cessation counseling while being treated for heart attack, congestive heart failure or pneumonia, we've found that it is now becoming a common practice for all patients to receive this counseling during their hospitalization," she added.

### **Wisconsin "is a national model" in Hospital Public Reporting**

The success of CheckPoint has not escaped the attention of those outside of the medical community. Seven Wisconsin health plans currently link to the WHA CheckPoint Web site, while 16 business organizations share the information. **State legislators have also noticed the impact** that CheckPoint has had in the two years since its inception.

**Rep. Curt Gielow** (R-Mequon), who chairs the Assembly Committee on Medicaid Reform, praised the program. "The WHA CheckPoint program, which celebrates its second anniversary this month, has put all Wisconsin hospitals in a leadership position among hospitals across the country by serving as the model for transparency initiatives nationwide," Gielow said.

**Nancy Nankivil-Bennett** is director of strategic health policy at the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) and a member of the Wisconsin Quality Steering Committee, the group that directs the development of CheckPoint. ETF administers retirement and other benefit programs for more than 500,000 Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) participants and 1,400 state and local government employers making it the largest purchaser of health care in Wisconsin.

"The Wisconsin Hospital Association's **Checkpoint Initiative can be considered one of our State's best emerging health care assets**. The balance of leadership, accountability and sheer will demonstrated by the Association has pushed public reporting of hospital quality and safety to the forefront in Wisconsin. As purchasers and consumers of health care, we now have the responsibility to act wisely on the available information," Nankivil-Bennett explained.

**WHA President Steve Brenton** says Wisconsin hospitals participate in CheckPoint because it is their mission to serve and improve the health status of their communities.

"Hospitals want to be accountable to the patients they serve. **Buying health care is not as simple as buying a car**. Consumers encounter complex medical terms and procedures, at the same time that they may be under stress because they or a family member are ill," Brenton said. "What we are really trying to do with CheckPoint is provide understandable information to patients and purchasers of health care so they can actively participate in decisions that will impact their health."

**CheckPoint was the first voluntary hospital public reporting effort of its kind in the nation to achieve 100 percent participation**. "Wisconsin's hospitals have demonstrated real leadership in their creation of and commitment to CheckPoint. It is a unique program that helps patients, families and employers better understand hospital quality and safety information in their state," said **Richard Davidson, president of the American Hospital Association**. "It's great to see this statewide effort achieve a two year milestone of providing an important resource for consumers as they make informed health care decisions. They have become a model for others to emulate."

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**NOTE: WHA developed charts that illustrate the improvements hospitals have made in key areas of quality. To view the charts go to: [http://www.wicheckpoint.org/about/statewide\\_achievements2.php](http://www.wicheckpoint.org/about/statewide_achievements2.php)**