



NEWS

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Federal Agency Ranks Wisconsin #1 in Health Care Quality

MADISON (June 26, 2009) ----- The federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) today released data that showed Wisconsin is leading – in fact is number one – in the nation for health care quality. Wisconsin had the top overall health care quality score among all 50 states based on measures that AHRQ used to evaluate health care performance.

The AHRQ 2008 *State Snapshots* summarize health care quality in three dimensions: type of care (preventive, acute and chronic care), setting of care (hospitals, ambulatory, nursing homes and home health care) and by clinical areas (cancer, diabetes, heart disease, maternal and child health and respiratory disease). The 2008 State Snapshots allow users to explore whether a state has improved or worsened compared with other states in several areas of health care delivery.

Wisconsin has consistently ranked at or near the very top of AHRQ's annual report for overall health care quality. Wisconsin ranked number one in 2006 and was second only to Minnesota in 2007. Minnesota was second to Wisconsin in the most recent rankings.

Dana Richardson, vice president of quality initiatives at the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA), said Wisconsin scored well on measures related to hospital, ambulatory and nursing home care with hospital and home health care showing the greatest improvement compared to baseline measures.

"Quality health care is safe care that fits the patient's needs, is right for their illness and is given without unnecessary delays. Wisconsin health care providers continue to work diligently with their patients to improve the care that they provide in their communities," according to Richardson.

WHA President Steve Brenton said, "Wisconsin is nationally recognized as a high quality, low cost health care provider. Wisconsin is well positioned to serve as a model for national and state level health reform."

While public reporting creates a measurement tool for improvement, the next step is changing processes to assure that the best care is provided and engaging consumers in their health.

According to AHRQ, its State Snapshots Web tool (<http://statesnapshots.ahrq.gov>) helps State health leaders, researchers, legislators and consumers understand the status of health care quality in individual states, including each state's strengths and weaknesses. AHRQ's annual State Snapshots is based on data drawn from more than 30 sources, including government surveys, health care facilities and health care organizations.

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