CMS Updates HQA Data on its Provider Website

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) updated its hospital quality website Tuesday with the latest data on 10 national quality indicators from hospitals participating in the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA), the public-private initiative led by the AHA and others to share hospital quality information with consumers.

The CMS website now features January - March 2004 data on the care provided to patients diagnosed with heart attack, heart failure, or pneumonia that was reported by the approximately 4,000 hospitals nationwide who are participating in the HQA initiative. Though the CMS website is intended primarily for clinicians, a consumer-friendly HQA site is planned for February 2005.

Connecticut has taken a leadership position in the HQA since its inception, and was the first state to achieve 100% participation by its hospitals in the voluntary national performance reporting initiative. Consistent with Connecticut hospitals’ commitment to public accountability, CHA updated the hospital performance reporting section of its website with the new data for Connecticut’s adult acute care hospitals early last week.

Stamford Hospital Receives National Quality Award

On Thursday, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) presented The Stamford Hospital with one of seven 2004 Ernest A. Codman Awards during JCAHO’s National Conference on Quality and Patient Safety in Healthcare in Chicago.

JCAHO’s Codman Awards, which are named for Ernest A. Codman, the physician regarded as the “father of outcomes measurement,” recognize excellence in the use of outcomes measurement to achieve improvements in the quality and safety of healthcare.

The Stamford Hospital was selected as one of two winners in the hospital category by a panel of national experts in quality measurement and improvement. The hospital was recognized for creating a protocol of intensive monitoring and treatment to maintain proper blood glucose levels in critically ill patients. Mortality for these intensive care unit (ICU) patients was reduced 29% and length of stay in the ICU decreased by nearly 11%.

“We applaud the winners of the 2004 Codman Awards for achieving improvements that are measurably advancing healthcare,” said JCAHO President Dennis S. O’Leary, M.D. “These leaders are truly the vanguard of raising the bar for healthcare quality,” Leary said.

In addition to reducing mortality and length of stay, The Stamford Hospital found its initiative decreased the development of new renal insufficiency among its patients. The number of patients receiving transfusions of packed red blood cells also was reduced. The impact of this simple and low-cost intervention on morbidity and mortality of critically ill patients led to greater use of data in the ICU and the protocol has now been extended to the hospital’s intermediate care unit.

“We are proud that the Joint Commission has chosen to recognize the life-saving glucose management protocol developed by our critical care unit team,” says Brian Grissler, President & Chief Executive Officer of The Stamford Hospital. “This is an effective intervention that can profoundly affect patient outcomes.”
ECHN Announces Leadership Transition

Marc Lory has resigned as President and CEO of Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN), a role in which he oversaw the integration of Manchester Memorial Hospital and Rockville General Hospital, as well as the expansion of both facilities during his six-year tenure.

In a press release issued last week, Lory stated, “ECHN has afforded me the opportunity to utilize the knowledge and expertise that I have accumulated in over 25 years in the healthcare field to help a newly-formed regional health system mature into the outstanding organization that it is today.”

In addition to his accomplishments at ECHN, Lory was very active in CHA, serving on the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and participating on several key committees, most recently as Chairman of the Committee on Patient Care Quality. “CHA is grateful to Marc Lory for his many contributions to healthcare in Connecticut, as well as his leadership activities at CHA,” said CHA President and CEO Jennifer Jackson.

According to the press release, issued last Wednesday, the ECHN Board of Trustees will be conducting a national search to seek a new President and CEO. In the interim, Peter J. Karl, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, has agreed to serve as President and CEO.

Connecticut Flu Activity Still “Sporadic”

As of the latest Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) weekly influenza summary update, Connecticut continued to report sporadic influenza activity. New York was the only state reporting regional activity, while Washington and Minnesota moved to local activity status (see map below).

Weekly Influenza Activity Estimates Reported by State & Territorial Epidemiologists
Week ending November 27, 2004 - Week 47

HCAHPS Review Panel Holds First Meeting

The 22-member panel of experts charged by the National Quality Forum (NQF) with reviewing a new version of the patient perspectives on care survey known as HCAHPS met in Washington, D.C. earlier this week.

Participating on the panel, named by the National Quality Forum (NQF) to conduct the consensus based-review process, was Carrie Brady, CHA’s Vice President, Quality and Performance Reporting. Brady shared the experience gained by Connecticut hospitals earlier this year when they pilot-tested a version of the HCAHPS survey as part of the special partnership between the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), and the Connecticut Department of Public Health to align the state’s hospital performance reporting requirements with current federal public reporting activities.

CHA will continue to work with NQF, CMS, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and others to make the survey practical for hospitals to implement.

CHA to Offer Program on Performance Benchmarking

Challenges in the environment in which hospitals operate (rising costs, reduced reimbursement, workforce shortages, and increasing utilization and consumerism) are pressuring hospitals to adopt aggressive management tools in order to improve efficiency and quality of care. Metrics and benchmarks have become increasingly important to hospitals in their efforts to establish, monitor, and achieve strategic objectives to meet the challenges they face.

To help its members better manage their organizations through the use of metrics and benchmarks, CHA will offer Making the Most of Performance Metrics and Benchmarks from 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, December 14, 2004.

Participants will learn how to use metrics and benchmarks to make the best decisions about people, work, and the delivery of care. Specifically, the program will cover:

- Benchmarking do’s and don’ts
- Reviewing what constitutes a good benchmark
- Identifying best practices
- Establishing metrics and placing them in a performance framework
- Implementing tracking and using metrics to manage an operation
- Securing senior management support

For more information on this program, visit the education section of the CHA website or contact Rhonda Bates at (203) 294-7267 or bates@chime.org.