

Information for Consumers – HOSPITAL COMPARISONS

Quality of health care can vary from hospital to hospital. It may also vary considerably within a hospital depending on the type of service or medical condition. For example, a hospital may excel in treating heart attacks but not do well in results from hip replacements. To make it easier for consumers to obtain information on the quality of care provided by particular hospitals, several websites provide important, useful information. The websites described below are a good starting point for consumers to learn more about hospitals in order to make informed choices.

Federal Hospital Comparisons:

“Hospital Compare” is a website created by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, (CMS), the Department of Health and Human Services, and other members of the Hospital Quality Alliance. The information available to you at this website is provided by hospitals that have agreed to submit information on quality to “Hospital Compare” to make it available to the public. In this tool, you will find information on how well hospitals care for patients for certain medical conditions or surgical procedures, as well as results from survey of patients about the quality of care they received during a recent hospital stay. You may also compare, up to three hospitals at a time, information on how well they are following recommendations for specific conditions, results of care and how patients rated their care. This information will provide you with a good starting point to compare the quality of care that hospitals may provide. However, it is important to talk with your doctor about this information to help you, your family, and your friends to make the best decisions about hospital care.

California Hospitals Comparison

“California Hospital Compare” is a website developed by the California Healthcare Foundation (CHCF) which grades hospitals as “Superior”, “Above Average”, “Average”, and “Below Average”. It includes a list of those who participate in the rating and those that do not. You may compare hospitals in areas of quality of care for specific conditions and procedures, as well as timeliness of care, critical care (ICU), patient safety, and overall patient experiences. As always, it is important to use this information in conjunction with talking with your doctor when making choices about healthcare.

Healthcare Foundation Fact Sheet

Another useful website from the California Healthcare Foundation makes it possible to download information on how to use the “California Hospital Compare” website (Fact Sheet on California Compare), which websites provide information on hospital quality (Hospital Report Card), Frequently Asked Questions about the website and Consumer Tips.

Quality Check

“Quality Check”, the website of the Joint Commission for Accreditation, rates healthcare organizations (including hospitals) by evaluating their ability to meet a variety of standards related to quality. Each organization’s achievement is compared with national and statewide targets. Institutions may be rated in one of the following four categories: 1) Best possible result, 2) Above target/range value, 3) Similar to target/range value, or 4) Below target/range value. On the “Quality Check” website, you may find information by city and state, name of the facility or zip code. The quality report includes the date of the most recent survey and the areas which were evaluated. It is also possible to register complaints on the website. As with all information that you receive on the web, you should discuss the information you obtain with your doctor.