



**Contact:** Elizabeth Lietz (AHA) – 202/626-2284  
Peter Ashkenaz (CMS) – 202/690-6149

## **NEW WEB SITE ALLOWS CONSUMERS TO COMPARE HOSPITAL QUALITY**

*Quality information backed by top health care experts and federal government agencies*

(Friday, April 1, 2005) – A new resource on hospital quality of care information is available to the public for the first time through an innovative, consumer-friendly Web site –

[www.HospitalCompare.hhs.gov](http://www.HospitalCompare.hhs.gov). *Hospital Compare* will provide the public with useful and understandable information on hospital quality of care in an easily accessible way to assist patients, families and communities in making important health care decisions.

*Hospital Compare* is the result the cooperation of the Hospital Quality Alliance, a landmark public-private partnership of hospitals, government agencies, quality experts, purchasers, consumer groups and other health care organizations. These organizations have joined together to develop a shared national strategy for hospital quality measurement and are committed to advancing quality of care. The site is the first step in the Hospital Quality Alliance's efforts to collect and share quality of care information with the public in a consistent, unified way.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Mark McClellan, American Hospital Association President Dick Davidson and AFL-CIO Director of Governmental Affairs Gerry Shea unveiled the Web site today on behalf of all members of the Hospital Quality Alliance at the Association of Healthcare Journalists National Conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

**-more-**

## Hospital Compare/Page 2

Approximately 4,200 hospitals – virtually all acute care hospitals – have voluntarily submitted quality information to share with the public. Initially, consumers will be able to research hospital quality information on 17 measures for three common medical conditions – heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia – with new conditions and measures be added in the future. For example, the Web site will indicate how often a hospital caregiver provided a heart attack patient with an aspirin and explain why that is an essential step in the patient’s care. *Hospital Compare* will continually evolve and be updated periodically to best meet patients’ needs.

*Hospital Compare* is a tool patients can use in making care decisions and patients are encouraged to use the information as a springboard to discuss their care with physicians and other hospital caregivers. The Web site includes a checklist of questions patients can ask their care providers to start that discussion. Patients should view *Hospital Compare* as one important source about a hospital, but not the only source.

Physicians, nurses and other caregivers working in the nation’s hospitals will also benefit from information on *Hospital Compare* by using the site to share successful, proven strategies to improve care while at the same time demonstrate accountability to the communities they serve. It is also designed to eliminate the often duplicative hospital quality of care reporting requirements from disparate organizations so hospitals can spend valuable time enhancing care instead of collecting data.

Hospital Quality Alliance members praised *Hospital Compare* as an important resource for patients, hospitals and communities in efforts to improve quality of care:

**Dick Davidson, President of the American Hospital Association:** “America’s hospitals – along with our other partners –have made a long-term commitment to giving the public not just data, but information to help hospitals talk with their communities about the quality of care they provide and the work they are doing every day to improve. Today with the launch of Hospital Compare an important first step is being made. I am proud of the more than 4,200 hospitals

**-more-**

### **Hospital Compare/Page 3**

nationwide who have voluntarily submitted quality-of-care information on three conditions that affect patients: heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia. To me that shows commitment and leadership.”

**Chip Kahn, President of the Federation of American Hospitals:** “This new consumer-friendly website marks a major milestone for the public and for health care providers because it allows people for the first time to go on-line to compare how well hospitals perform on standards of care for three of the most common and costly conditions for hospitalization: heart attack, heart failure, and pneumonia. These three conditions are just the first step toward building a comprehensive website that will allow the public to compare hospitals on a number of important measures of patient care.”

**Jordan J. Cohen, M.D., President of the Association of American Medical Colleges:** “Hospital Compare is a significant milestone in national efforts to improve healthcare quality and an important demonstration of hospitals' commitment to be publicly accountable for the patient care services they provide. For teaching hospitals in particular, participation in this national effort helps to integrate healthcare quality into the educational process. This is extremely important as these hospitals train the physicians of tomorrow to provide safe, effective, and complex care to some of the nation's sickest patients.”

**Kenneth W. Kizer, MD, MPH, President and CEO of the National Quality Forum:** “Today's debut of Hospital Compare represents a step forward for American healthcare quality improvement. The public will now have access to standardized performance measurement data for nearly 4,000 acute care hospitals, allowing apples-to-apples comparison of some types of hospital care. In addition, since public reporting of performance data can be a powerful motivator for change, Hospital Compare will likely serve as a catalyst for hospitals to do better.”

**Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality:** “Hospital Compare is an important step in improving the quality of health care in America. The data will help consumers make more informed decisions about hospital care and will give hospitals the data they need to ensure that they are providing high-quality care.”

**Lawrence A. McAndrews, president and CEO of the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions:** “Hospital Compare is an important step forward in providing health care consumers and purchasers with information to assist them to choose wisely and to foster accountability, transparency and improvement. Children's hospitals are proud to be a part of the Hospital Quality Alliance. We look forward to incorporating more measures over time, including ones that are applicable to the care provided to children and adolescents.”

**Linda J. Stierle, MSN, RN, CNAA, BC, CEO, American Nurses Association:** “Hospital Compare will provide nurses with quality tools and information they need to support them in

**-more-**

## **Hospital Compare/Page 4**

their day-to-day work with patients, and it also will drive system changes that improve nurses' ability to deliver quality care. As a result, the quality of patient care will improve, and nurses will experience higher job satisfaction. It's important and exciting work."

**Gerry Shea, Director of Governmental Affairs for the AFL-CIO:** "The launch of Hospital Compare is an enormous step forward in terms of consumers getting the information they need to make their health decisions and to forge a working care partnership with their physicians. For consumers, information is power. And in this case, that power will lead to more educated consumers and healthier lives."

**John Rother, AARP Director of Policy and Strategy:** "AARP members need comparative information about hospital quality from a trusted source. We hope the Hospital Compare website launched today is the beginning of a comprehensive source of information that will help patients make good decisions based on quality. AARP will continue to work with the Health Quality Alliance and CMS on Hospital Compare in an effort that could lead to better hospital care and more informed patients."

###