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HQA Adds New Hospital Quality Information to *Hospital Compare* Web Site

*Includes new data on pneumonia mortality and pediatric asthma;
updates other mortality information*

WASHINGTON (EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 A.M. AUGUST 20, 2008) – Today, the Hospital Quality Alliance (HQA) announced the addition of new hospital quality information to the *Hospital Compare* Web site (www.HospitalCompare.hhs.gov). The new quality information will allow the public to see for the first time hospital mortality rates for pneumonia patients and information on the care provided to pediatric asthma patients.

The new mortality information for pneumonia patients joins existing information on *Hospital Compare* about hospital mortality rates for heart attack and heart failure patients, both of which are being updated for the first time since their original publication.

For mortality rates, hospitals are placed in one of three categories based on their performance in relation to a national rate – “no different than the U.S. national rate,” “better than the U.S. national rate” or “worse than the U.S. national rate” – to provide results that are clear and understandable to patients and consumers. Each hospital’s mortality rate also is available as a

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single number, along with a confidence interval that indicates the degree of certainty regarding the accuracy of the mortality rates.

The methodology used to calculate both the hospital-specific and national mortality rates uses one year of medical billing history and is risk-adjusted to account for certain patient characteristics. However, the mortality information does not take into account patients' personal care preferences, such as a patient's wish not to be resuscitated if he or she has a medical emergency. Hospitals' goal is to provide the right care at the right time, and an important part in reaching this goal is listening to patients and respecting their preferences and wishes.

In addition to the mortality data, hospitals also are sharing information on how many times they took the appropriate steps in treating pediatric asthma patients. The new clinical information represents the first time the *Hospital Compare* Web site has contained data specifically about children.

The new updates join a growing collection of clinical care information on the *Hospital Compare* Web site as part of a public-private effort to improve consumer education about quality of care. The HQA will continue to build the Web site with an expanded range of information, including the following:

- Expanded information about surgical care, including steps taken to prevent blood clots and surgical site infections
- Hospital readmission rates
- Care received in hospital outpatient settings

The HQA chooses measures that have been endorsed by the National Quality Forum and assess the care provided to patients suffering from common conditions that are the primary causes of

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hospitalization. More than 4,000 hospitals – including virtually all acute-care hospitals – have voluntarily submitted quality information to share with the public through the Web site.

The HQA is a voluntary public-private initiative that includes hospitals, physicians, nurses, federal agencies, quality experts, consumer and business groups. HQA members collaborate to improve the quality of care provided by the nation’s hospitals by measuring and publicly reporting information about this care. The goal of the HQA is to collect and report data on a robust set of standardized and easy-to-understand hospital quality measures. The HQA is continuing its efforts to determine useful information to include on the *Hospital Compare* Web site in the future.

What members of the Hospital Quality Alliance are saying about the new information:

John Rother, AARP Executive Vice President, Policy & Strategy: “Information is the key to making smart health care decisions. Hospital Compare is a valuable tool to help patients find the best care and to encourage improvements in hospital quality. AARP is proud to work with the Hospital Quality Alliance to continually update and expand the information available from Hospital Compare and boost the quality of our nation’s health care.”

Gerry Shea, Assistant to the President for Governmental Affairs of the AFL-CIO: “Consumers clearly value the information on Hospital Compare, as the big jump in website traffic demonstrates. The latest additions represent significant enhancements. We are especially pleased that the first measures of children’s health are being posted and look forward to working with CMS to add more such measures.”

Rich Umbdenstock, President and CEO of the American Hospital Association: “For the past three years, hospitals have openly shared information on the quality of care provided to their patients. As part of the Hospital Quality Alliance, hospitals have been working in partnership with doctors, nurses, federal agencies, quality experts, and consumer and business groups to bring to light data on important steps taken to treat heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical patients, as well as mortality data for heart attack and heart failure patients. We have added information on patients’ experience of care and, in today’s release, pediatric asthma data and mortality data for pneumonia patients. Hospitals are committed to sharing this report with the public and to using this information to improve the care they provide.”

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Linda J. Stierle, MSN, RN CNA, BC, CEO of the American Nurses Association: “On behalf of America's 2.9 million registered nurses, the American Nurses Association strongly supports the inclusion of additional data into Hospital Compare to increase the public's knowledge of mortality rates for pneumonia and for pediatric asthma. ANA has a long history and commitment to advocating for the availability of meaningful, rich data which helps educate all Americans and better prepares them to make appropriate decisions about their health care needs.”

Robert Dickler, Senior Vice President of the Association of American Medical Colleges Division of Health Care Affairs: “Teaching hospitals, as part of their mission to support education, are continuously working to integrate and promote health care quality within the educational process for new physicians. Likewise, as care-providers, teaching hospitals are working to use meaningful national quality measures to improve care and to assist patients and their families in making informed decisions about the care they receive. As Hospital Compare adds new and better data, the Web site assists teaching hospitals in meeting those goals.”

Peter V. Lee, Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project co-chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Business Group on Health: “The Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project is pleased that Hospital Compare is being updated to increase the publicly reported data that consumers can use to assess hospital performance.”

Debra Ness, Disclosure Project Co-Chair and President of the National Partnership for Women & Families: “We look forward to continued progress that will make the Hospital Compare website a truly user-friendly tool that advances consumers' ability to select providers based on quality.”

Chip Kahn, President of the Federation of American Hospitals: “The new pneumonia mortality information, along with the pediatric asthma and updated heart attack and heart failure mortality data, showcase the Hospital Quality Alliance’s ongoing commitment to consumer education and high-quality care. This information, along with existing and forthcoming information on HQA’s Hospital Compare website, strengthens Hospital Compare as a powerful resource for consumers and patients and helps hospitals to continue to improve health care delivery.”

Lawrence McAndrews, President and CEO of the National Association of Children’s Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRI): “On behalf of the nation's children's hospitals, which are committed to excellence in providing care to children and their families, the National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions is very pleased that Hospital Compare will now include information for parents seeking care for their children. This is an important first step, and NACHRI looks forward to working with the Hospital Quality Alliance to expand over time the types of information available to parents and others seeking information on the quality of children's health care.”

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Larry S. Gage, President of the National Association of Public Hospitals and Health

Systems: “The National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems is pleased that CMS is updating Hospital Compare data to enable the public to see information on how hospitals perform in their communities. Public hospitals are committed to working with CMS and HQA to improve the quality and quantity of meaningful data for consumers.”

Andrew Webber, President and CEO of the National Business Coalition on Health:

“Today’s update provides businesses and individual consumers with new information about hospital quality. This will help people be more informed as they make care decisions based on quality and price. We’re proud to be part of this public-private group that’s bringing meaningful information to the public about hospital quality.”

Janet Corrigan, President and CEO of the National Quality Forum: “Public reporting is a critical part of our efforts to encourage and reward the achievement of higher levels of performance. We applaud HQA’s Hospital Compare for its commitment to empowering consumers and practitioners with meaningful comparative data, so we can all learn and move toward a system that provides higher quality and affordable care.”

About Hospital Compare

Hospital Compare is the result of the cooperation of members 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 Hospital Quality Alliance created the site – www.HospitalCompare.hhs.gov – to provide quality of care information to the public in a consistent, unified way. For more information about the HQA and its partners, please visit www.hospitalqualityalliance.org.

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