



For release April 1, 2005

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### **New Web Resource Gives Hospital Patients Quality Information**

*Public Reporting and Quality Improvement Training Drives Improved Hospital Care*

A new consumer web site unveiled today by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that runs Medicare and Medicaid, provides instant, objective, easy-to-use and free information about the quality of hospital care in Washington State and nationwide.

Information about the quality of hospital care is now available by visiting [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov) or [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and selecting *Compare Hospitals in Your Area*, or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Either way, consumers will get the information they need to help make more informed health care decisions.

Qualis Health, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization in Washington State, and the Washington State Hospital Association and its member hospitals are working together to make good clinical care great, and great care even better.

“Medicare’s new web resource, *Hospital Compare*, gives consumers information to help them make an informed decision about hospital care,” said Leo Greenawalt, president of the Washington State Hospital Association. “We encourage consumers to use this tool, talk with their physician and consult information resources for hospital information,” added Greenawalt.

“As the Medicare contractor in Washington State charged with working with hospitals to improve their quality of care, we have seen first hand how hospitals are making changes and improving,” said Jonathan Sugarman, CEO of Qualis Health. “We commend our state’s hospitals for making quality a top priority every day.”

The new resource was developed by CMS, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with nearly every eligible hospital in the nation. It reports quality of care information for hospitals on three common conditions: heart attack, heart failure, and pneumonia. Some hospitals may have data on additional conditions, and in the future, new measures and information on patient satisfaction will be added.

“People should review the data on *Hospital Compare* and then talk with their physician about any concerns and about quality of care,” Sugarman continued. “You cannot always predict when you will need hospital care, but you can be informed.”

CMS’ Hospital Quality Initiative is part of a national Quality Initiative that also focuses on improving the quality of care in home health agencies and nursing homes. “We are working closely with Washington State’s health care providers and Qualis Health to improve the quality of care available in hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies and dialysis centers,” said CMS Regional Administrator R.J. Ruff. “This is just one step we are taking to make sure that Medicare fits beneficiaries’ health care needs by modernizing the program to include a new prescription drug benefit.”

The national Quality Initiative is an important step in CMS’ comprehensive quality strategy, which consists of four elements:

- Regulation and enforcement activities conducted by State Survey Agencies and CMS;
- Improved information for consumers on quality of care;
- On-going, community-based quality improvement programs for providers; and
- Collaboration and partnerships to leverage knowledge and resources.

**Press Conference, 4/1/05 at 10 a.m.:**

**The Washington State Hospital Association, Qualis Health, and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will hold a press conference launching Hospital Compare on Friday, April 1 at 10 a.m. at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle. For more information, contact Todd Langton at Qualis Health at 206/364-9700 or [toddl@qualishealth.org](mailto:toddl@qualishealth.org)**

*Qualis Health is dedicated to improving the quality of healthcare delivery and health outcomes for individuals and populations across the nation. In operation since 1974, the non-profit, healthcare quality improvement organization (QIO) is headquartered in Seattle, Washington and has offices in Idaho and Alaska.*

*The Washington State Hospital Association is the trade association representing all Washington’s 97 hospitals, providing advocacy, education, and working for high quality health care for all Washingtonians.*