



Talking Points

Hospital Rankings

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Issue

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) *Hospital Compare* website provides consumers hospital-specific Medicare data on indicators of quality. To provide information about several measures of quality in a single rating, CMS included overall quality star ratings as part a July 2016 update to *Hospital Compare*, though Maryland's hospitals were exempt at that time. The star ratings assign hospitals 1 to 5 stars to indicate overall performance, with 5 being best. When CMS updates *Hospital Compare* on or about December 20, overall quality star ratings will be assigned to Maryland's hospitals.

Talking points

- Maryland's hospitals support efforts to inform and empower health care consumers. However, there is a concern that star rankings like these oversimplify complex data and could, as a result, mislead consumers. Health care consumerism is an evolving phenomenon, and there should be a balance between providing simple information and overloading consumers with complicated data. No single website or dataset can accurately measure a hospital's quality.
- Maryland's hospitals are part of a unique payment model that holds hospitals accountable for a broader scope of quality measures than hospitals in the rest of the nation. Maryland's hospitals' accomplishments under this model include four consecutive years of outpacing the nation in reducing Medicare readmissions, a 43 percent decline in hospital acquired complications, and savings to the Medicare program of over \$750 million.
- As a result of our model, hospitals in Maryland are engaged in a far-reaching initiative known as population health management. This effort requires hospitals to not only treat the patients in their facilities, but also to manage the health of those in their communities so they can avoid unnecessary hospital visits. As a result, Maryland's hospitals are treating more patients who have highly complex illnesses, often with multiple comorbidities. In this context as well, there is a concern that star rankings oversimplify complex data and thus do not accurately reflect the real world delivery of health care.