



Consumer Health Decisions # 4

How Does Your Hospital Rate?

Have you ever wondered how your hospital compares to others across the state or nation? Recently, several online resources have been developed to help healthcare consumers select and compare hospitals. The two websites featured below are sponsored by the Wisconsin Hospital Association (CheckPoint) and the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Hospital Compare). While not every procedure is included in the comparison, the reports generated by these websites give consumers a snapshot of the overall quality of care provided at hospitals. If you do not have internet access, visit your local library to utilize the free internet and computer resources.



Hospitals across Wisconsin voluntarily report data to an online database, called *CheckPoint*. A report is tabulated for each hospital that includes key indicators such as error prevention and delivery of medical services. By visiting the website (<http://www.wicheckpoint.org>), you can customize a report for your hospital. You can also compare your hospital to others in the region or across the state.



The US Department of Health and Human Services developed another hospital reporting website, known as "Hospital Compare." Similar to CheckPoint, you can search for and create a report on a specific hospital. You can also compare up to 3 hospitals in a region by using the zip code tool. Hospital Compare (www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov) has information about hospitals throughout the country, so it is an ideal online tool for individuals and families who frequently travel or reside in another state for part of the year.

Discussion Questions:

1. Look up your local hospital and check its rating.
2. Have you or your acquaintances had any concerns about your local hospital from past visits?
3. Role play a call to the hospital administrator to constructively address your concerns.