

Measuring Health Care Quality and Cost in Massachusetts November 6, 2009

Dear Interested Party,

Pursuant to Section 16K of Chapter 58 of the Acts of 2006, the Health Care Quality and Cost Council was established in large part to monitor the Commonwealth's health care system and disseminate cost and quality information to consumers. Using data collected for the Council's consumer-friendly website (<http://www.mass.gov/myhealthcareoptions>), the Patrick Administration has prepared the following technical analysis to assist policymakers and industry experts in understanding variations in care delivery.

[Measuring Health Care Quality and Cost in Massachusetts](#) is the first annual publication developed by the Division of Health Care Finance and Policy on behalf of the Council. The report provides a comparative view of hospitals based on performance measurements adopted by the Council for use on its website. Section 1 of the report examines the quality and the cost of care by procedure or condition; section 2 provides a summary of quality and cost information for each hospital. However, data for comparing both the cost and quality of a given service remains limitedly available.

This report shows significant variations in hospital performance on select measures, especially in the rates of stroke mortality and costs of certain diagnostic testing. As you know, transparency helps to initiate professional competition and reduce deviations in the cost and quality of care in Massachusetts.

Looking ahead, next year's report will include new quality measurements, including serious reportable events, hospital acquired infections and surgical care infections, as well as new cost measurements, including episodic costs associated with well baby and diabetes care. The addition of these and other measures in the future will help refine our understanding of the underlying causes of variations in the health care system and guide both policymakers and providers in establishing an effective and cost-efficient health care system.

Sincerely,

Judy Ann Bigby, M.D.
Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services