



On-line Access to Hospital Charge Information Now Available
Web site shows charges from all Wisconsin hospitals

www.wipricepoint.org

WHA issued the following as a news release to selected press on February 11, 2005.

A new Web site unveiled today (February 11) provides free access to an unprecedented level of detail about charges and services at Wisconsin hospitals. The Web site, known as "PricePoint" (www.wipricepoint.org), allows users to easily access charge information about any type of hospitalization at any Wisconsin hospital. The Web site is being sponsored by WHA Information Center, which recently replaced a state agency as the entity responsible for collecting and reporting Wisconsin hospital data.

"PricePoint is just one of the many ways that Wisconsin hospitals are demonstrating their commitment to providing information that can help consumers, employers and insurers with health care decisions," said Joe Kachelski, WHA Information Center vice president.

...continued on page 2



PricePoint - continued from page 1

Kachelski said PricePoint is unique among similar Web sites across the country in that it provides aggregate “discount” information for each hospital for the three major kinds of health care coverage – private insurance, Medicare and Medicaid. This information allows users to understand how hospitals’ charges compare to the amount of revenue they actually collect for services provided to the three patient categories.

In most cases out-of-pocket hospital costs for privately insured patients are determined by their health insurance policies, which have negotiated specific discounts with a hospital or health system and do not reflect actual charges. However, a growing number of Wisconsin residents are being covered by so-called consumer-directed health plans, under which the billed charge may factor into the amount that a patient would pay for a specific procedure at the hospital.

“We expect that as the health insurance market evolves, hospital charges may be increasingly relevant to consumers in the future,” Kachelski said. “PricePoint will be a valuable tool as health care consumerism increases.” Kachelski said PricePoint provides more complete and current information than a Web site formerly operated by the state of Wisconsin. PricePoint displays the four most recently reported quarters of data from hospitals, and will include information about all hospitalizations. The former state Web site included hospital-specific information only about selected obstetric and knee-replacement hospitalizations.



Marc Marotta

“The PricePoint Web site is exactly the kind of innovation that we envisioned would result from our partnership with the WHA Information Center.”

*Marc Marotta, Secretary,
Department of Administration*



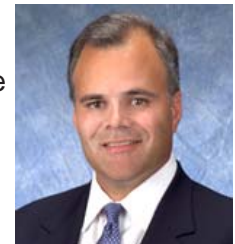
Rep. Wasserman

“We hear a lot of talk about the concept of health care transparency. It is great to see that concept put into practice in this new Web site.”

*State Rep. Sheldon Wasserman, M.D.
(D-Milwaukee); Ranking Democrat on the
Assembly Health Committee*

“I have consistently advocated for innovative applications of information technology in health care. The PricePoint Web site is light years ahead of the old system and makes hospital charge information easy to obtain and understand.”

*State Sen. Ted Kanavas (R-Brookfield)
Author of the legislation that privatized the hospital data collection*



Sen. Ted Kanavas



Sen. Carol Roessler

“As consumer driven health care becomes increasingly more popular and necessary, health care cost transparency has become a critical component in empowering consumers to make educated decisions. Through their new ‘PricePoint’ Web site, the Wisconsin Hospital Association has successfully compiled and organized hospital charge data in a way that is easy to understand and is readily available to anyone interested in comparing hospital charges across the state. This represents a significant step in allowing Wisconsin health care consumers to ‘comparative shop’ for health care.”

*State Sen. Carol Roessler (R-Oshkosh)
Chair, Senate Health, Children, Families, Aging & Long Term Care Committee*



James Mueller

“When it comes to health care information, more is generally better, as long as it’s understandable and credible. The PricePoint Web site significantly expands the amount of credible information about hospital charges in Wisconsin, and it is extremely user-friendly.”

*James Mueller, President,
Frank F. Haack & Associates, Wauwatosa*