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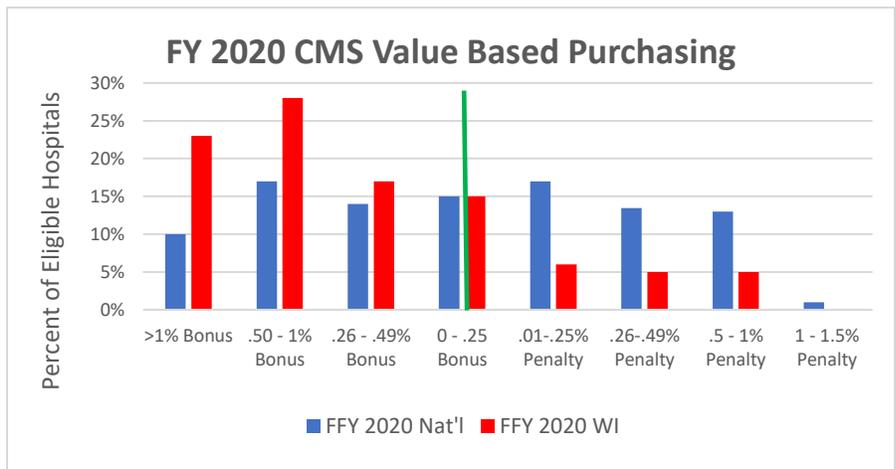
TO: Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

**FROM: Eric Borgerding, President/CEO
 Beth Dibbert, Chief Quality Officer**

DATE: March 5, 2020

RE: CMS Releases 2020 Quality Data, Wisconsin Hospitals Remain Among Best in the Country

The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released updated quality data showing Wisconsin hospitals performing better than the nation in several health care quality metrics. Wisconsin hospitals continue to score among the best in the country in the CMS Valued-Based Purchasing Program, patient-reported satisfaction scores, readmission penalties and overall Medicare spending per beneficiary.



CMS' **Valued-Based Purchasing (VBP) Program** was created under the Affordable Care Act (funded by hospitals directly) to provide incentives to hospitals performing well and penalties to hospitals in need of improvement. The metrics include composite scores based on clinical outcomes, person and community engagement, efficiency and cost reduction, and safety. In FY 2020, nearly all Wisconsin hospitals in the VBP program received a bonus while only 10 hospitals in Wisconsin received a penalty in the program.

According to Medicare, Wisconsin's hospitals deliver some of the highest quality and value care in the country .

Nationally nearly 1,200 hospitals, roughly 44 percent of all VBP hospitals, received a penalty. Since most of Wisconsin's hospitals performed well enough for a bonus, the statewide net gain resulting from hospital performance is over \$6 million annually. These are funds that could go to other states but instead are coming to Wisconsin to improve access and care.

Not only does this mean that patients are receiving higher quality care in Wisconsin, it means that care is being delivered more cost-effectively. The severity-adjusted, geographic cost-adjusted Medicare Cost Per Beneficiary metric is included as one of four elements in Value-Based Purchasing. Wisconsin hospitals consistently score in the top-ten when it comes to the cost of delivering care to Medicare beneficiaries.

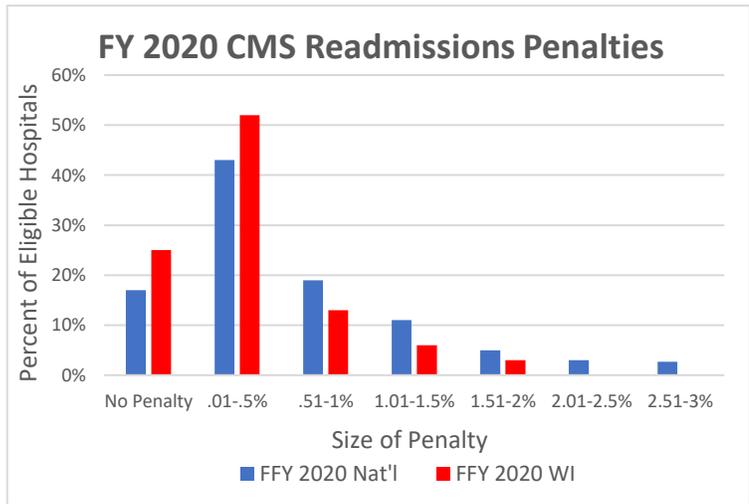
In addition, Wisconsin hospitals continue to lead the country in **reducing hospital readmissions, outperforming the national average with the**

Wisconsin hospitals have some of the lowest costs in the country for care delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.

number of hospitals in the top two categories. Unplanned hospital readmissions are disruptive to patients and families and are a resource burden to the health care system. Hospitals are dedicating human and financial resources to ensure the high quality care outcomes achieved in hospitals are sustained by safe transitions of care to home or the next health care setting.

The high performance we see from hospital readmissions data correlates well to what patients tell us about the experience they have in Wisconsin hospitals. Across the country, Medicare assesses patient satisfaction using a

standardized tool called **HCAHPS** (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems; pronounced “H-caps”). The tool rates several components of care provided to patients within the hospital **reported by the patient directly**. One of the core areas studied through this survey is the patient’s preparedness for care transitions and understanding of discharge instructions. **Wisconsin is the top scoring state in the nation on both measures.**



WHA works closely with our hospital members to improve the quality of care patients receive, including directly with frontline providers through WHA’s nationally recognized quality improvement team. WHA quality staff play a significant role in coordinating collaboration among hospitals in Wisconsin and across state borders. Patients can view their local hospital’s quality performance on WHA’s quality transparency tool – www.wicheckpoint.org.

This quality work is made possible by a public policy environment that supports our health care workforce, rather than imposing distracting or confusing regulatory burden on our frontline care providers. We have worked hard with all of you to remove outdated barriers to patient health information, better enable peer review programs, provide grants to train providers in rural settings, expand the utility of telehealth technology and provide additional resources through reimbursement increases. These proactive accomplishments improve quality of care for patients and have helped WHA members accomplish the outcomes we are seeing today. **To the Legislature we say ... THANK YOU!**

Additionally, Wisconsin lawmakers have wisely avoided unnecessary and burdensome new regulations that do little, if anything, to improve patient care. For instance, the recent quality data announcement from CMS reaffirms Wisconsin’s position as the **best state in the country for patient satisfaction related to patient discharge instructions and care transitions from the hospital to home.**

WI Hospital Patient Satisfaction Rankings (HCAHPS)

<p>#1</p> <p>Discharge Instructions</p>	<p>#1</p> <p>Care Transitions</p>
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While some nationally-driven organizations lobby for more mandates (2019 Senate Bill 516 and Assembly Bill 584) on Wisconsin’s #1 ranked hospitals, the legislature has rejected these solutions in search of a problem. In fact, the American Hospital Association estimates regulatory burden on hospitals requires the equivalent of 59 full time employees, a quarter of which are clinicians who could otherwise be caring for patients. **The costs associated with regulatory compliance is equivalent to \$1,200 every time a patient is admitted.**

Let’s applaud our nation’s leading hospitals, not add to their already significant regulatory burdens.

To learn more about high quality health care in Wisconsin or tour a local hospital to learn more about their quality improvement program, contact Kyle O’Brien on WHA’s government relations team at kobrien@wha.org.