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ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION LAUNCHES WEBSITE TO HELP PATIENTS COMPARE LOCAL HOSPITALS AND PHYSICIANS

*Comprehensive Directory Makes it Easier to Find Information
on the Quality and Cost of Local Health Care*

Princeton, N.J. (June 28, 2011) – The [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](http://www.rwjf.org/) (<http://www.rwjf.org/>) today launched the nation’s most comprehensive [online directory](http://www.rwjf.org/qualityequality/product.jsp?id=71857) (<http://www.rwjf.org/qualityequality/product.jsp?id=71857>) for patients to find reliable information on the quality of health care provided by physicians and hospitals in their communities. From Maine to California, medical patients can scroll over a U.S. map and find web-based resources to help them choose a doctor or hospital in their town based on whether patients received recommended tests and treatment, the outcomes of their care, their experience with providers, or the overall cost of care.

Comparing Health Care Quality: A National Directory is a map-based listing of health care “performance measurement” resources available across the country. The directory links to 197 free and publicly available reports in 46 states, as well as 27 reports with information on the performance of physicians and hospitals nationwide. There are no reports for Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho and Alabama.

For example, people living in Washington State can use the directory to find information on care provided by [clinics and hospitals](http://www.wacommunitycheckup.org/?p=viewreports&orgname=all&county=All+Counties) (<http://www.wacommunitycheckup.org/?p=viewreports&orgname=all&county=All+Counties>) from the non-profit Puget Sound Health Alliance, or the [cost](http://www.wahospitalpricing.org/) (<http://www.wahospitalpricing.org/>) and [quality](http://www.wahospitalquality.org/) (<http://www.wahospitalquality.org/>) of hospital care from the Washington State Hospital Association.

“The directory is a place to go for people who want to research doctors and hospitals for themselves and others,” said [John R. Lumpkin](http://www.rwjf.org/about/staffbio.jsp?id=935), (<http://www.rwjf.org/about/staffbio.jsp?id=935>) M.D., M.P.H., senior vice president at the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](http://www.rwjf.org/) (<http://www.rwjf.org/>). “Measuring the quality and cost of our health care and making it publicly available enables those who give, receive and pay for care to make the right choices for them, to improve health care and lower costs.”

RWJF officials say the number of websites that compare health care quality is increasing, and a [recent study](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2011/PIP_HealthTopics.pdf) (http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2011/PIP_HealthTopics.pdf) found that 80 percent of Internet users look for health information online. *Comparing Health Care Quality: A National Directory* lists websites that offer information that is

quantifiable and based on recognized national standards of how health care should be delivered, such as ensuring that patients receive the right preventative screenings or that patients with diabetes receive appropriate blood sugar tests.

Choosing the right doctor or hospital is one of the most important health care decisions people will ever make, but they have little information to help guide that decision.

“Most people still obtain their care where grandma says it’s good, or brother says it’s good or that’s where my friends go. And I heard this is a good doctor and I heard this is a good hospital,” said [John Hickner](#) (http://my.clevelandclinic.org/staff_directory/staff_display.aspx?doctorid=9494), M.D., M.S., chairman of the Department of Family Medicine at the [Cleveland Clinic](#) (<http://my.clevelandclinic.org/default.aspx>). “What I think they will do though is they will encourage healthy competition amongst health care systems and physicians to improve their product,” Hickner added about the directory.

Data on the performance of health care providers helps patients take a more active role in managing their health care because it lets them see what proper care looks like and whether local hospitals and physicians are delivering it. They can use this information to talk to their doctors about their own care. Performance data also enables hospitals, physicians and other health care providers to examine their own performance, compare it with others and identify areas for improvement.

Employers and those who pay for care can use the directory to find local information to determine the value of the care they are purchasing and discuss ways to lower overall costs.

The national resources listed in the directory are also useful for businesses whose employees move or receive care in different areas of the country, or for those with out-of-town relatives.

“People move around the country, and have relatives all over the country,” said [Jim Chase](#) (<http://www.mncm.org/site/?page=about&view=4>), M.H.A., president of [Minnesota Community Measurement](#) (<http://www.mnhealthscores.org/>). “You have data in Minnesota but my mom lives in Iowa. So what can you tell me about the care there? This kind of tool is helpful for people to see what kind of information is available.”

For nearly a decade, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has been dedicated to the research and development of initiatives to improve health care quality, and its funding has helped define the field of quality improvement by developing national quality standards, initiating pay-for-performance experiments, creating improved care models for patients with chronic illnesses, improving quality and safety in hospitals, and engaging stakeholders to measure performance and publicly report on the quality of care.

To view the directory, visit www.rwjf.org/qualityequality/product.jsp?id=71857. For more information on quality health care, visit www.rwjf.org/qualityequality.

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EDITOR: To embed a banner on your website that links to the directory, contact alyssa.snow@msslgroup.com.

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