



Overall Hospital Star Rating Revealed

How to Improve Care Quality in
Your Facility



Introduction

Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating Revealed: How to Improve Care Quality in Your Facility



The Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating was put into effect by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to enable patients and caregivers to more seamlessly compare hospitals and healthcare facilities. Hospitals are assessed across 64 quality measures to create an overall score on a scale of one to five stars (1). The assessment outcome is of great significance to hospitals, as the credibility, efficiency, culture and financial state of the institution are directly impacted and/or influenced by the star rating. Facilities can achieve higher scores by fostering a patient centered culture throughout the organization. It has been shown that hospitals who place great emphasis on the importance of both patient satisfaction and quality of care earn the highest star ratings.



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What Is the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating?

CMS released the first Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating in July of 2016, with the intention of improving evaluation methods over time via data analysis and public feedback (1). The star rating assesses hospitals in regards to reported quality measures. Quality measures evaluate care quality of common factors and conditions, such as heart attack, pneumonia, rates of infection, complications and patient experience (1).

While specific to patient satisfaction, the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey was also put into effect to establish a nationwide standard for comparing hospitals. The Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating utilizes HCAHPS survey results to measure the patient experience portion of the assessment. HCAHPS scores are a significant part of the star rating, as they make up 22% of a hospital's overall score (2).

In order to make the star ratings more accessible to patients and caregivers, CMS launched Hospital Compare, a website where users can easily access star ratings, compare facilities and inquire about care quality.



The site was developed as a means for patients to make more informed decisions about where to receive care (3). Information used to calculate the overall star rating is collected through both the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) and Hospital Outpatient Quality Reporting (OQR) Program (1). Star rating measures are based on clinical standards of extensive review and testing. Most are endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF) (4).

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2. Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings: Answers to your frequently asked questions. (n.d.). Retrieved July 17, 2017, from <https://www.advisory.com/research/financial-leadership-council/at-the-margins/2016/12/demystifying-overall-hospital-quality-star-ratings>

3. What is Hospital Compare? (n.d.). Retrieved July 18, 2017, from <https://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/about/what-is-HOS.html>

4. CMS Hospital Star Ratings First Step in Effort to Improve Quality Measures. (2016, October 03). Retrieved July 18, 2017, from <https://news.aamc.org/patient-care/article/cms-star-ratings-effort-improve-quality-measures/>

How Hospitals Are Assessed



Quality measures are categorized into seven different measure groups:

- Mortality,
- Safety of care,
- Readmissions,
- Patient experience,
- Care effectiveness
- Care timeliness &
- Medical imaging efficiency (2).

Summary scores from each measure group are weighted and then added together. The sum equals the overall summary score, which then translates into the number of stars earned (2).

Certain measures used to calculate the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating only include Medicare beneficiary information, such as the number of deaths, readmissions, and use of medical imaging (1).

Other measures, however, utilize general patient population information, regardless of the insurance provider. Patient experience, safety, and timely and effective care measures include data from all adult hospital patients. The quality of certain specialized care, such as specialized cancer care and transplant programs, is not included in the star rating (1).

Only 80% of hospitals listed on the Hospital Compare site reflect an Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating.

Certain hospitals can not provide information for all of the required measures, typically smaller or newly opened hospitals, and therefore do not receive an overall rating (1). Those who do receive a rating are assessed on anywhere from nine to sixty-four measures, depending on the information provided (1).

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Why Is the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating Important?



The Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating impacts hospitals either negatively or positively depending on the scores. High ratings bring facilities to light on a national level that may otherwise go unnoticed, attracting more patients. Poor ratings can negatively impact financial stability, as a low star rating may deter new patients from attending.

Those who are dedicated to ensuring quality patient care are the ones who consistently receive higher ratings (4). Those with lower ratings are encouraged to improve overall care quality in order to achieve a better reputation and maintain a healthy patient population. The movement to improve ratings benefits the facility overall, sparking an organization wide initiative to research and invest in patient care improvement methods.

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How Can the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating Be Improved?

Better Patient Satisfaction

There is a strong correlation between hospitals with high overall star ratings and hospitals with high HCAHPS scores (2). In other words, high overall care quality is correlated with high patient satisfaction. By providing patient centric services, such as language services for the limited English proficiency (LEP) and Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH) patient population, hospitals can work towards improving patient satisfaction and quality of care. High star rating facilities foster a culture of constant progress towards improved patient care and care quality. There are several steps that facilities can take to improve ratings and foster such a culture, including enhancing focus on consumer perception, conducting regular data assessment, retraining healthcare staff and enabling better patient-provider communication (1).

Enhanced Consumer Perception

Consumer perception of care quality is directly impacted by star ratings. Patients and care givers can easily access star ratings on Hospital Compare, a website provided by CMS. The ratings enable patients to make more informed decisions about where to receive care (3). By prioritizing consumer perception, healthcare facilities work towards improving patient satisfaction, achieving higher ratings, gaining credibility and securing more business. Consumer perception of care has become so significant that many hospitals have since implemented a comprehensive strategy dedicated exclusively to overcoming star challenges.

Focus on consumer perception, regularly analyze data, retrain staff



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Company Wide Alignment

High star ratings can be achieved with an organization wide alignment on the improvement steps that need to be taken. By analyzing both short and long term star rating measures, such as mortality and safety of care, hospitals can more quickly identify and address any shortcomings that may negatively impact their rating. Positive trends, such as an increase in patient-provider engagement or a reduction in 30 day readmissions, should also be noted and efforts duplicated in such areas. Once a patient centric culture is present, it is important to reemphasize the importance of quality care to healthcare staff as well as the great impact of star ratings on both the financial state and credibility of the institution.

High Patient Engagement

Hospitals with high overall ratings consistently demonstrate high levels of patient engagement. Studies show that high patient engagement is correlated with better patient outcome (5). One way to quickly improve patient engagement is to ensure that all patients have meaningful access to healthcare information. For LEP and Deaf/HOH patients, this information can be conveyed through the use of a medically qualified interpreter. Once patients have meaningful access to their healthcare information, they are more likely to actively participate in their healthcare plans, which has been shown to improve both patient outcome and overall level of care (5).

Patients with meaningful access to healthcare information tend to be more engaged in care.

Conclusion

The Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating was put into effect by CMS to enable patients and caregivers to more seamlessly compare hospitals and healthcare facilities. Overall star ratings provide comparisons of nearly 4,000 hospitals across 64 quality measures with ratings ranging from one to five stars. The Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating impacts hospitals both negatively and positively depending on the scores. The movement to improve ratings can be quite beneficial to the overall facility, as it can spark an organization wide initiative to research improvement methods and invest in them as needed. Improvement tactics include training staff, increasing patient-provider engagement and implementing a comprehensive improvement strategy across the organization. The overarching method to achieving high star ratings is providing high quality patient care.

About Us

Stratus Video is a technology-driven company that is changing the way patients and medical professionals connect across all areas of health care. Stratus Video built its foundation in the language services industry by innovating various remote interpretation services that include onsite, video and audio interpreters. Stratus Video Language Services include four proprietary products: a video remote interpretation product, Stratus Video; an over-the-phone product, Stratus Audio; an in-person solution, Stratus InPerson; and a solution for the deaf and hard-of-hearing population, Stratus Remote CDI. Stratus Video has leveraged its existing technology into a telehealth division aimed at improving patient care while reducing hospital costs. Stratus Video Telehealth Solutions include ER/Urgent Care Virtual Consults, the Post Hospital Discharge Solution, Behavioral Health Solution, and Care Coordination Solution. Led by a team of dedicated individuals with decades of experience in the health care and technology markets, Stratus Video is committed to enabling visual connections and vital conversations.

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www.stratusvideo.com

