

## **New website provides information on quality of hospital care in South Carolina**

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(Columbia, SC – February 21, 2008) Individuals who want to make sense of confusing information about patient safety and quality in South Carolina's hospitals now have a new place to turn for user-friendly, factual information. Today, the South Carolina Hospital Association launched a new public reporting and educational website called [www.mySCHospital.org](http://www.mySCHospital.org). All acute care and critical access hospitals in the state have voluntarily chosen to submit data to the website.

"This initiative is a proactive response to growing public interest in measuring patient quality and safety," according to SCHA President Thornton Kirby. "The high level of participation clearly demonstrates that South Carolina hospitals place a high priority on providing information that will help people become more informed consumers of health care."

The website offers consumers, employers, insurers, providers, and policy makers reliable, valid data on 23 clinical interventions that medical experts agree should be taken to treat heart attacks, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical infection prevention. For example, one measure reports how frequently an aspirin is administered to a patient experiencing a heart attack within 24 hours of admission. This is one way to thin the blood and reduce stress on the heart.

"Educating the public is an important aspect of this website. We want patients to know and look for the kind of interventions that have been proven effective in treating certain health problems," says Rick Foster, M.D., SCHA's senior vice president of quality and patient safety. He anticipates that new measures will be added as more evidence is gathered on which treatments constitute the best proven practices of medicine.

All the measures were chosen because they include data on the main causes of hospitalization. "By giving consumers information about these conditions, we can help improve their overall health status," Foster said. "This is an evolving science; mySCHospital is not meant to be a final product, rather it is a first step to share measurements that are scientifically proven to produce quality outcomes."

"We want to ensure that mySCHospital.org includes measures that are meaningful to consumers, so we are measuring processes proven to positively influence the outcome of care," Kirby said. "By voluntarily reporting important data to the public, it increases public awareness on what to look for in a hospital, and hospitals will continue to seek ever higher levels of quality." He pointed

out that one of the important aspects of the program, in addition to providing information to the public, is that data will be shared among the hospitals in South Carolina and used for internal quality improvement programs.

The new website is just one way that the state's hospitals are working collaboratively to improve quality of care and patient safety in South Carolina hospitals. SCHA's statewide initiative, called *Every Patient Counts*, involves partners—hospitals, insurers, businesses and other organizations—from across the state involved in dozens of activities designed to improve healthcare quality and patient safety. Other programs underway under the Every Patient Counts umbrella include efforts to reduce the incidence of bed sores, prevent falls, improve care of diabetic patients, reduce the risk of all infections, including the serious MRSA infections, reduce the time it takes to get heart patients in the treatment room for life-saving angioplasty.

Aunyika Tocharoen Moonan, PhD, MSPH, CPQH, SCHA's, director of quality measurement services, applauds hospital efforts to report measures and improve quality and patient safety. "We know that valuable data contain information that will help our providers get better and keep our patients safe. Data form the basis for our discussions and decision-making," she said.

"This website will give businesses access to information they need to help them and their employees make good health care purchasing decisions by providing comparative data on both cost and quality. Employers need to become better informed consumers because the most expensive health care is poor quality health care," Foster added.

The mySCHospital.org website went live on February 21.

#### *About the South Carolina Hospital Association*

*Founded in 1921, the South Carolina Hospital Association is the leadership organization and principal advocate for the state's hospitals and health care systems. Based in Columbia, SCHA works with its members to improve access, quality and cost-effectiveness of health care for all South Carolinians. The state's hospitals and health care systems employ more than 70,000 persons statewide.*