



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **The Commonwealth Fund Launches New Web Site for Health Care Providers to Compare and Improve Quality of Hospitals Nationwide**

## ***WhyNotTheBest.org Features Side-By-Side Comparison of 4,500 Hospitals, As Well As Benchmarks and Quality Improvement Resources***

December 17, 2008, New York, NY—The Commonwealth Fund has launched a new Web site that allows health care providers to conduct side-by-side comparisons of 4,500 hospitals nationwide, track performance over time against numerous benchmarks, and download tools to improve health care quality. “[WhyNotTheBest.org](http://WhyNotTheBest.org)” is a free resource which provides data on hospital performance across two dozen measures of recommended care, and links users to improvement resources directly related to those measures, connecting them to hands-on tools they can put into practice.

WhyNotTheBest.org also lets users search for and compare hospitals with similar characteristics, such as region, ownership, size, and type (such as safety net, teaching hospital). Benchmark comparisons show how a hospital measures up against others in the same state, the top 10 percent, or the national average. IPRO, a not-for-profit health care evaluation and quality improvement organization, conducted all data analysis and Web development for the site.

“There are many report cards that measure quality of care, but WhyNotTheBest.org is unique in that it allows providers to benchmark performance against leaders and track improvements, and it provides credible tools to help providers achieve better performance,” said Anne-Marie Audet, M.D., Vice President, Quality Improvement and Efficiency, at the Commonwealth Fund.

WhyNotTheBest.org was created to address shortfalls in the U.S. health care system, such as high variability in health care quality as documented in *Why Not The Best: Results from the National Scorecard on U.S. Health System Performance*, a biennial report prepared by The Commonwealth Fund for its Commission on a High Performance Health System.

Populated with publicly-reported data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Web site Hospital Compare, WhyNotTheBest.org shows how hospitals fared on 24 nationally recognized measures of care, including those evaluated in The Commonwealth Fund’s *National Scorecard* report. Users can assess hospital performance on recommended care for heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia, and surgical infection prevention. Each hospital receives a composite score for performance across these four conditions as well as an overall composite. Rankings across 10 measures of patient satisfaction are also reported, pulled from data in the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), a survey of patients’ experience in U.S. hospitals.

“We are home to many of the best physicians and hospitals in the world but we aren’t where we could be on many quality measures. This resource offers health care providers another useful tool in their continued efforts to provide the best care possible for their patients,” said Commonwealth Fund President Karen Davis.

WhyNotTheBest.org links to patient brochures, hospital self-assessment tools, videos, posters, and other materials created by organizations like the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the American Heart Association, and various hospitals around the country. The Web site also features seven case studies of top performing hospitals and their success stories, like Flowers Hospital in Dothan, Alabama which climbed from average to top performer in CMS care measures over the last 10 years.

“In five minutes, I was able to compare my own hospital’s performance on dozens of measures to those of other large teaching hospitals, to best performers in California, and to national performance leaders, using WhyNotTheBest.org. I was also able to trend our performance over time and read how innovators solved their own quality problems. WhyNotTheBest.org represents the marriage of health care transparency and modern Web technologies, and the results are thrilling,” said Robert Wachter, M.D., Associate Chairman of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Department of Medicine, Chief of the Medical Service at UCSF Medical Center, and a national leader in hospital quality and patient safety.

The Commonwealth Fund will work with organizations such as IHI, the American Hospital Association, and the American College of Physicians to encourage their members to learn about this new resource. The site was user-tested by various hospital organizations and other provider groups.

“We are delighted to work with The Commonwealth Fund on this important project and strongly believe in data-driven tools which help providers improve performance,” said Jaz-Michael King, Senior Director of Healthcare Transparency at IPRO.

Web site design elements include a “My Profile” page where users can save work to review later and a Google map feature to find hospital locations. The Commonwealth Fund plans to add other elements such as an “Improvement Calculator” which helps hospitals track their progress toward meeting certain benchmarks on quality. As new data become publicly available, the Web site will include additional performance measures, such as hospitals’ 30-day readmission rates. More resources and case studies will be added over time, including best practices for use by a broad range of health care organizations, such as safety net hospitals and health systems.

**The Commonwealth Fund is a private foundation supporting independent research on health policy reform and a high performance health system.**