

# HEALTH CARE IMPACT

## Improving Patient Safety in Oregon Hospitals

Acumentra Health, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Oregon, helps hospitals implement system improvements and cultural changes that lead to safer and more effective care for patients.

During 2008–2010, we worked with 11 Oregon hospitals—our Identified Provider Group, or IPG—on quality improvement projects for the Medicare program. All but 2 hospitals were identified as potentially needing assistance with quality issues. These projects focused on improving hospitals' performance on the composite Appropriate Care Measures (ACMs) for preventing surgical infections and caring for heart failure patients. A high ACM score means a hospital's patients got every element of recommended care.

### Preventing post-surgical infections

Infection following surgery can cause serious harm to patients, requiring substantial and expensive follow-up care. Some patients never recover.

- The IPG hospitals working with Acumentra Health adopted strategies that have helped an estimated 968 additional patients avoid infection.

Through the Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP), we helped the 11 hospitals perform better on the SCIP ACM indicator, which covers a set of 8 guidelines for preventing infection.

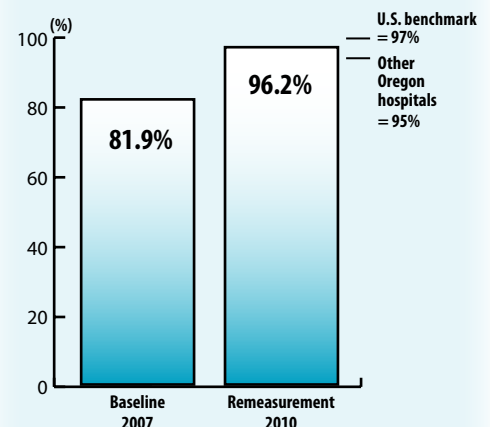
- As a group, the IPG hospitals improved their scores on the SCIP ACM from 82% in Q1 2007 to 96% in Q1 2010. Of the 11 hospitals, 5 achieved the SCIP ACM for at least 95% of their patients, and 2 achieved 100%. The national benchmark rate, reliably achieved by top-performing hospitals, is 97%.



**Additional patients  
avoided infection**



**Oregon Hospital  
IPG performance  
on SCIP ACM**



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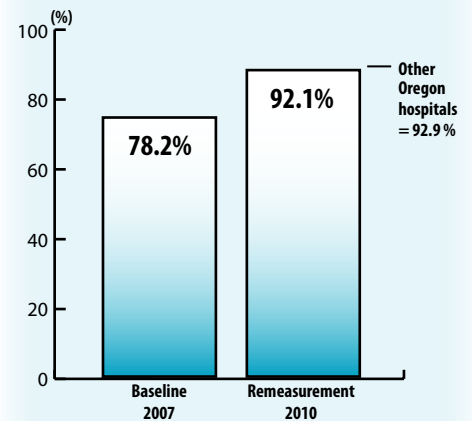
## Heart failure care

Heart failure is a leading cause of hospital admissions and readmissions. Nearly 1 in 5 Medicare patients returns to the hospital for care within 30 days. Acentra Health worked with Oregon hospitals on ways to provide care that helps heart failure patients stay healthier.

- By Q1 2010, the 11 IPG hospitals had improved their combined rates on the 4-measure heart failure ACM from 78% to 92%—nearly equal to the statewide rate. Two hospitals achieved the ACM for 100% of their patients.



## Oregon Hospital IPG performance on Heart Failure ACM



### Building a patient safety culture

To develop reliable systems for delivering safe care, hospitals must create a work culture in which staff can speak out about safety concerns and learn from errors. Acentra Health used **culture change** as a key element of its clinical interventions with 14 Oregon hospitals (11 in the SCIP/HF project, plus 3 in a pressure ulcer prevention project).

- Many medical errors result from lack of communication about a patient's status at "handoff" from one provider team to another. All 14 hospitals now use the SBAR-R (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation, Readback) communication system to improve the flow of patient handoff information.
- A self-directed nursing team at one hospital took the initiative to enhance communication around its surgical processes—helping the hospital earn 100% on the SCIP ACM.
- Another hospital created "Safety Culture in a Box"—self-learning modules, required for all relevant staff, covering "red rules" (unbendable policies), clear and complete communication, critical thinking, and checking and coaching.
- A large urban hospital is studying how surgeons can use key messages in the operating room to enable or encourage other staff to speak up about safety concerns.

For more information, read Dr. Ruth Medak's article in *Patient Safety and Quality Healthcare*, January–February 2011.

### Sources

**Estimated infections prevented:** Calculated using CMS guidelines: (remeasurement rate – baseline rate) x at-risk population (remeasurement denominator).

**SCIP ACM rates:** CMS data warehouse from CART. SCIP ACM includes 8 measures that cover antibiotic selection and timing for start and stop, avoidance of shaving the skin, body temperature and glucose control, and venous thromboembolism prophylaxis. CMS now uses a 10-measure ACM for SCIP.

**Oregon heart failure ACM rates:** CMS data warehouse from CART.

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