

Breaking Through Barriers to Lasting Change

The new era of accountability and transparency will affect the reputation and reimbursement of each and every hospital. Meeting that challenge requires clear, customized, credible and clinically relevant information. The Accountability AuditSM provides your hospital with that information. It enables you to speak directly to all stakeholders and engage them in a common effort.

The Accountability AuditSM is conducted by Health Quality Advisors, in partnership with The Greeley Company division of HCPRO, Inc. Together, these two organizations also have the capability to work with your hospital to implement the action agenda necessary to ensure that your institution consistently delivers demonstrably superior care.

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What would your hospital look like if it were sitting naked in an exam room?

The Accountability AuditSM



Naked in the Exam Room

It may sound like a classic bad dream, but you're wide awake. Transparency and accountability are transforming health care. The detailed clinical comparisons once held securely in locked drawers are now freely available to outsiders – and the door of that once-private exam room has swung open to admit health plan execs, employers, lawyers, consumers and journalists. They're all poking and prodding you, looking for answers about the quality of your hospital's patient care.

The pressure to demonstrate consistently excellent care is being ratcheted up. The government and private insurers are instituting tough pay-for-performance rules. Meanwhile, consumer Web sites that draw millions of viewers are beginning to post physician ratings and hospital report cards.

Unfortunately, the physicians, nurses and line managers who are focused on day-to-day patient care often don't understand that their actions are being exposed to public and payer scrutiny – at least until a bad grade is splashed over the local paper's front page or a big payer starts threatening to cut payment.

To help your hospital meet this threat to reimbursement and reputation, and to help you consistently deliver demonstrably superior care, Health Quality Advisors has developed the Accountability AuditSM.

Customized Information Creates Action

The Accountability AuditSM is designed to help a hospital's leaders, staff and trustees clearly see *their hospital the way others see it*. That candid picture may reveal flaws that need fixing, but it may also highlight areas where your institution is a consistently high performer. The audit itself is comprised of three parts — an assessment, an audit and an action agenda.

Assessment. The process begins with an *environmental assessment*. This includes assessing the local transparency and accountability environment, including government and private initiatives. That assessment also determines which neighboring hospitals your institution should be compared to and which of your clinical product lines are of greatest interest. Meanwhile, selected nurses, hospital managers and physicians are also invited to

participate in candid structured discussions of your hospital's quality and safety programs and issues.

Audit. The next step is developing a *customized performance comparison* of key safety and quality measures that outsiders could be using to evaluate your institution. We compare your hospital to identified competitors and to best-performing hospitals nationally that we have determined share similar characteristics; e.g., size, geography, organization of the medical staff or other measures. We place those findings within the context of the strengths and weaknesses of your institution that emerge from our interviews.

In an era when busy clinicians are constantly buffeted by demands and directives that may appear to have no relationship to patient care, the Accountability AuditSM presents practical and actionable information. For example:

- How does our care in specific clinical areas compare to that of direct competitors and to best-performing hospitals with characteristics similar to ours?
- What do different quality report cards say about our care in areas where our hospital believes it has a competitive advantage?

"Your report was clear, well reasoned and impactful. The Accountability AuditSM has been the catalyst for a larger quality improvement effort that is taking us to a whole new level with respect to the quality of care we deliver."

Eric Pifer, MD, Chief Medical Information Officer, El Camino Hospital, Mountain View, CA

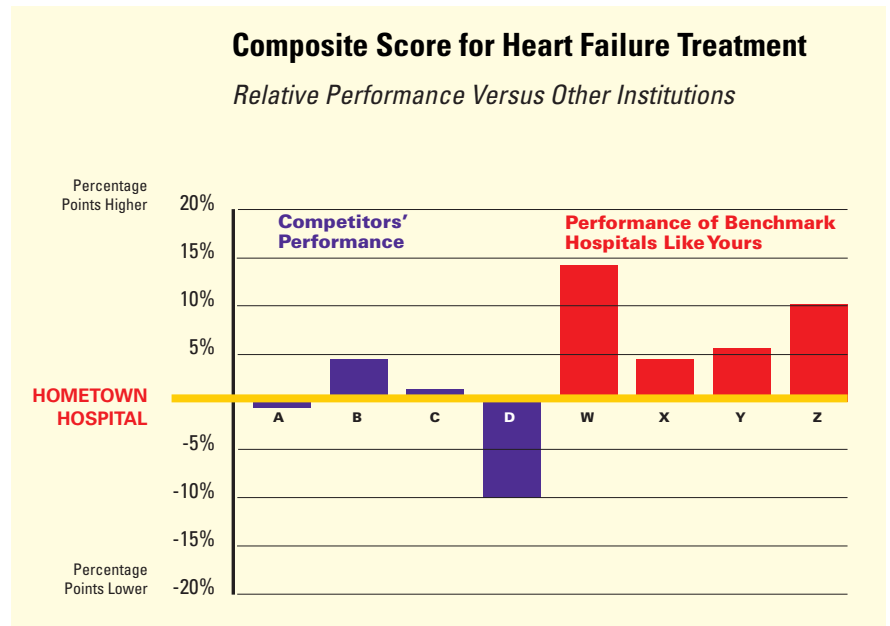
- Which aspects of our organizational structure and culture are helping us get consistently superior results, and which are holding us back?

Action agenda. Finally, the Accountability AuditSM identifies *opportunities for improvement* that are primarily related to aspects of care controlled by physicians and those that are related to broader team efforts.

Hometown Hospital: Physician Leaders Decide to Lead Improvement

The illustration shown here is based on actual data from a community hospital whose goal was to move from "above average" care to "best care." One set of data we examined was Medicare core measures.

The standard increasingly being used by top-performing hospitals and large payers is to provide 100 percent of evidence-based care for 100 percent of patients meeting the care criteria. We bundled together individual core measures related to heart failure for Hometown, for its competitors and for best-performing hospitals to compare how often they met this standard.



In the chart that's pictured here, Hometown Hospital's success rate became the baseline. The chart shows at a glance that local competitors (Hospitals A-D) provide evidence-based heart failure care related to the Medicare measures at about the same rate, or slightly better than, Hometown – with the exception of Hospital D, which does much worse.

On the other hand, Hospitals W-Z, which we identified as similar hospitals nationally that were performance leaders, consistently met the heart-failure standard of care better than Hometown or its neighbors.

After being presented with this and other Accountability AuditSM findings, Hometown Hospital's Medical Executive Committee voted unanimously to ask for the resources necessary to help lead effective and lasting improvement. The administration complied, and Health Quality Advisors worked with the hospital to address the systemic barriers that prevented them from delivering the consistently superior care they wanted for their patients.