

## Healthy Philly Q&A

The following questions and answers address common questions regarding the Healthy Philly Initiative. We look forward to work with individuals and organizations dedicated to improving healthcare outcomes as a way to achieve Citizens4health's vision for an American healthcare system.

[Please send us any questions or make comments related to our work and ways to improve healthcare.](#)

### What are the goals of the Healthy Philly Initiative?

The goal of the Healthy Philly Initiative is to provide you information that helps you as a patient, consumer and citizen to achieve the best healthcare for all of us.

**As a patient** we provide information on outcomes to various health care procedures and safety issues.

**As a consumer** we address the cost of health care to you, the convenience of the services you receive.

**As a citizen** we provide information on how your taxes are spent and cost of healthcare impacts the local and national budgets.

### Why are you doing the Hospital in the Spotlight project?

Reliable data is crucial for addressing problems. Transparent information is a critical element of a healthcare system as it motivates providers to do what we know works to make care safer. Availability of healthcare information outcomes is a basic element for accountability and supports decision making in a competitive environment. Measurement and public reporting of healthcare outcomes enables continuous improvement and value for patients, citizens and providers.

By focusing on hospitals we hope to provide more local information that can be helpful in our overall goal of improving the quality of healthcare for all Americans at a cost that is affordable.

We believe there are many reasons to start by focusing on the performance of hospitals.

Hospitals vary in quality of the healthcare they provide. Because medical events are unpredictable, even if we look at the quality from a personal point of view, we would want all hospitals to achieve the best care they can provide.

Hospitals are central to the economy of their communities; significant changes will greatly impact and can disrupt the financial well being of the community.

Hospital care is expensive and is a major contributor to the cost of healthcare on the national level and the projected national debt in particular.

Hospitals are central to the healthcare delivery system.

Hospitals vary in the type of governance, type of services, and quality of care for various clinical conditions.

### **Why should I care?**

For you, your family and millions of Americans, hospitals make a difference between life and death, but as is well known not all hospitals are equal when it comes to performance that matters; quality, safety, access, cost, patient experience and meeting their tax exempt responsibility.

**As patients** we expect the care we receive is the right care at the right time without medical errors. If this were the case we can expect, 98,000 additional patients would survive each year. About 197,000 patient complications would be avoided annually. The average patient stay would decrease by nearly half a day.

**As consumers** we must ensure that the value of the health care services is affordable, fair and competitive. Yet, For those with insurance, the cost to the individual and business in terms of insurance payments, co pays is escalating and becoming unaffordable for more and more Americans For those without insurance, the cost of hospital care is unaffordable.

**As citizens** we expect that taxes that are utilized for health care activities and tax exempt status is warranted. Yet, There is little accountability as to the utilization of funding for hospital care. There is limited accountability for the hospital's activities for the public good

**As healthcare** providers we expect to provide our patients optimal care. Yet, Not all providers are equal when it comes to diagnosing and treating medical condition Poor health care accounts for significant cost

### **What information about the hospitals will you include, and why?**

**Philly Hospital in the Spotlight** includes the following challenges faced by hospitals.

Hospital profile: General Information about the hospital

Hospitals vary in the services they provide, the role they play in their communities, the governance. By providing a profile of the hospital we can compare among the hospitals, learn how to engage with the hospitals leadership and other information.

#### [Public reporting by the hospital: Accountability and transparency](#)

This section will provide an overview how well the hospital provides information about the quality of care that it delivers the ease of using its website, and information available to the public about the process of care and other important variables. This section includes best practice in public reporting, and action plan for citizen engagement.

#### [How safe is your hospital?](#)

We believe that when it comes to patient safety, all healthcare facilities need to be top performers. How do we make our hospitals and other healthcare institutions as safe as they can be? We discuss the barriers that have cost thousands of lives and billions of dollars and take action to hold stakeholders accountable.

#### [Quality of healthcare delivered at the hospital](#)

This section provides information about the care provided by the hospital. The information includes many aspects of the process of care, the outcome of care and complications that are the result of hospitalization. You will find aspirational goals for each variable, hospital best practice and tools to improve your outcomes if hospitalized.

#### [Access to quality healthcare in the hospital](#)

This section is about the experience of patients attempting to receive services at the hospital. What is the insurance requirement? Coordination of services. Waiting times to see healthcare providers. Best practice for coordinated care.

#### [Cost and value of healthcare](#)

This section provides information about the cost and value of healthcare services provided by the hospital. The information includes co pays and other charges. It also includes ways to get the best value.

#### [Community Support: How the hospital helps their communities?](#)

This section is about the activities the hospital undertakes to benefit their community. How do we as citizens hold hospitals accountable for taxes that are utilized for medical services and their tax exempt status. The tax treatment of hospitals is reflected in the consensus of the public good of the services they provide. Are they good neighbors in their communities? How do they determine the community benefits activities that justify their tax exempt status?

#### [Patient experience of hospitalization](#)

This section provides information about what patients who used the hospital say about their experience. Find tools to improve your hospital experience. Take action to improve the patient experience at your hospital.

## **What are the goals of the Philly Hospital in the Spotlight Project?**

### **Public reporting**

100% public reporting of relevant healthcare outcomes by hospitals  
User friendly interface to reliable, current and relevant information that is helpful for consumers, patients and citizens

### **Quality of healthcare delivered at the hospital**

Hospitals achieve the aspirational goals  
Hospitals that are 100% medical error free from preventable errors

### **Access to quality healthcare**

Access to all aspect of healthcare in a timely manner at the various hospitals in the area.

### **Cost and value of healthcare**

Providing value comparisons for hospitals in an objective manner  
Provide health care value that is affordable to the patient/consumer/ society

### **Community Support: How hospitals help their communities**

Develop a framework to assess and be responsive to the healthcare needs of the community.  
Hospitals provide meaningful community service for their non-for profit status.

### **Patient experience of hospitalization**

Hospitals provide consistent outstanding care that is reflected by feedback of patient's experience.

### **What other information is included in the Philly Hospital in the Spotlight project?**

The initiative includes information about the hospital, best practice in the various sections, aspirational goals, tools for taking action, additional resources. We subject the hospital to a check up. We use data to check up on the hospital's performance. Using the information and tools for public engagement, we believe that you can make a positive difference in the quality of care provided.... Additionally, holding hospitals accountable for their health outcomes, community activity and financial performance may contribute to getting national health care cost under control.

### **How do you gather the information, is it reliable?**

We use established indicators collected by reliable sources such as Medicare, the VA system, the state. We assume that the information is reliable and go to great length to make sure it is also valid. It will include information accessed from data bases as well as other sources.

### **How do you decide on best practice?**

We use the following criteria for best practice:

1. Potential impact
2. Ease of use
3. Availability

We will include any feedback to improve the choices we make about best practice.

The healthcare consumer is presented with multiple ratings and ads that claim the superiority of one or another hospital, one program or another.

### **How do you understand the challenge of healthcare in the United States?**

Hospitals face many challenges in providing the healthcare services that we need. Atul Gwande MD, a surgeon and well known writer summarizes that challenges in the following paragraph,

Hospitals are complex organizations. Half a century ago, medicine was neither costly nor effective. Since then, however, science has combated our ignorance. It has enumerated and identified, according to the international disease classification system, more than 13,600 diagnoses—13,600 different ways our bodies can fail. And for each one we've discovered beneficial remedies—remedies that can reduce suffering, extend lives, and sometimes stop a disease altogether. But those remedies now include more than six thousand drugs and four thousand medical and surgical procedures. Our job in medicine is to make sure that all of this capability is deployed, town by town, in the right way at the right time, without harm or waste of resources, for every person alive. And we're struggling. There is no industry in the world with 13,600 different service lines to deliver.

### **What do you mean by public engagement with stakeholders?**

It is clear however that hospitals should be accountable and expected to achieve highest level of clinical and financial outcomes. By engaging with hospitals as consumers, and citizens, in addition to patients, we can have an important role to play in achieving the goals of Citizens4health.

### **What do you hope will happen next?**

As healthcare is local, the focus of the initiative is hospitals in the Delaware Valley but can easily be implemented in other areas. As the 2012 election is approaching, we hold politicians accountable for the claims they make about healthcare.

### **How do you define quality healthcare?**

Quality healthcare can be defined as the extent to which patients get the care they need in a manner that most effectively protects or restores their health. This means having timely access to care, getting treatment that medical evidence has found to be effective. When it comes to hospitals, quality healthcare includes diagnosis and treatment along the continuum from emergency room to discharge that leads to the best patient outcomes. Additionally quality hospital care includes the post hospital experience thorough care coordination. Most importantly quality hospital care is safe for the patient.

### **How do you plan to achieve your goals?**

Providing a framework and hosting a non partisan deliberative, solution oriented process informed by facts associated with local cultural, health and political realities

Providing tools to hold the various stakeholders accountable for agreed upon health related outcomes

Providing information and tools to make healthcare services effective, sustainable and accountable

### **What is your time frame for achieving the goals?**

**Healthy Philly Initiative** is a process to improve hospital care as part of overall health care. Its initial focus is the Delaware Valley (Southeast PA, South New Jersey and Northern Delaware). Meaningful change requires a process for monitoring outcomes. Additionally it will include an interactive format for coming up with additional outcomes to measure. Hospital Watch and Citizens4health web sites will have a regular report of the progress toward achieving the goals. Efforts will be made to extend the process to other regions. ([Click here for time line](#))

### **What can I do to be part of the solution?**

Citizens4health believes that we must all contribute to improving public reporting as an important step to improving healthcare for all Americans. Click on Take Action to learn more of what you can do in the personal, social and political arenas.

### **What are civic engagement resources and tools?**

Keeping with our vision and mission, and the goals of the Citizens4health, we will follow the listed timeline to address the information needs for consumers, patients and citizens. Additionally, through our other initiatives we will be present to the public information about hospital care, governance of health care institutions, how hospitals meet the requirements non-for-profit status.

We also cover news and information on healthcare transparency, value-driven health care, public reporting legislation and health care report cards. ([Sign-up for newsletter](#))

### **What is the down side of public reporting?**

...(First do no harm)

Yes, Bad data can be much, much worse than no data at all. And without serious oversight, there's a good chance you'll end up with some terribly misleading numbers.

### **Why start with putting hospitals in the spotlight?**

Quality of care varies greatly among hospitals. Complications from common procedures and high readmission rates are serious concerns at many of our nation's healthcare institutions. Simply put, if you require medical attention, there is no guarantee you will leave the hospital in better health than when you entered thanks to sub-par or inconsistent care.

Unless these failings within the hospital system are publicly reported, we cannot expect any real change within the system. There have been many efforts to provide consumers with information on hospital safety, but too often the approach has been misguided. We cannot predict when and where we will need emergency care. Patients often do not have the time or resources to research which hospital best suits their needs or has the best care as they would other consumer choices.

That is why we as citizens must ensure that all hospitals are top hospitals, capable of providing the care and services needed to achieve optimal health care outcomes.