



CLINICAL VIEWPOINT

INFORMATION
ON HOSPITAL
TRENDS

Core Measures Providing Measurable Standards for Quality Care

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LIFEPOINT HOSPITALS is dedicated to delivering compassionate, high-quality patient care. Ensuring that all physicians are consistently informed and up-to-date on best practices is integral to this commitment.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has established evidence-based measurements that are widely accepted in the healthcare industry to help hospitals and physicians optimize patient care. These measures, called Core Measures, provide a standard by which the quality of care at LifePoint hospitals is gauged by CMS.

Physicians have many questions about Core Measures and the impact these measures have on the practice of medicine. Here are some answers that hopefully explain the importance of Core Measures performance.

Q. What are Core Measures?

A. Core Measures are best practices that are based on scientific literature for the treatment of a number of illnesses, including pneumonia, acute myocardial infarction (AMI or heart attack), and surgical care. Currently, CMS has identified 31 measures with many others under consideration.

Q. Who decided these measures were the best practices?

A. LifePoint didn't create Core Measures, and CMS didn't arbitrarily invent them. Representatives from various medical specialties came to consensus regarding best practices to form these measures.

Q. Why is it important to follow Core Measures?

A. Core Measures provide a preliminary way of evaluating quality of care hospital by hospital, allowing for apples-to-apples comparisons among hospitals. Eventually, CMS plans to reward hospitals for quality care by using these measures to determine reimbursement.

Q. Aren't Core Measures the same as cookbook medicine?

A. These measures are not a prescribed recipe that all physicians have to follow; however, Core Measures help ensure that physicians are practicing the highest quality of care. How physicians treat patients can change based on recognized studies, but Core Measures help to assure that physicians are consistently delivering the best care to their patients.



CORE MEASURES ALLOW PHYSICIANS TO VALIDATE THE GOOD WORK THEY DO.

Core Measures help to assure that physicians are consistently delivering the best care to their patients.

OUR MISSION
AND VISION

MISSION

*Making communities
healthier*

VISION: HIGH FIVE

*Delivering high quality
patient care**Supporting physicians
to achieve clinical
excellence**Creating excellent
workplaces for our
employees**Strengthening our
hospitals' role in the
community**Ensuring fiscal
responsibility*

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- Q.** I've practiced medicine for years, and my outcomes are excellent; why should I change my practice patterns?
- A.** Congratulations on your track record. Best practices are based on the outcomes of thousands of cases. While you might have good outcomes with your current practice patterns, Core Measures are recognized as the standard of care.
- Q.** Are you trying to tell physicians how to practice medicine?
- A.** We're trying to educate excellent physicians on how to be the very best they can be, compared to their peers. The decision of how to care for patients is left to the individual physician, but Core Measures are the recognized standard of care, and it is LifePoint's responsibility to assist physicians in delivering the best quality of care.
- Q.** There are patients that warrant a different form of treatment besides what's recommended in Core Measures. What's a physician to do?
- A.** All patients are not alike, and there are exceptions to these best practices. If this is the case, simply document the reason for your decision and it will be taken into consideration.
- Q.** With what other hospitals can we compare our outcomes?
- A.** You can compare your hospital to just about any other hospital you wish by going to www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov. Keep in mind that data usually lags by about six months due to verification.
- Q.** What about LifePoint? How are we doing with Core Measures?
- A.** LifePoint is committed to delivering the best quality of care for the patients we serve. Our performance on Core Measures has improved significantly over the past year, and we continue to make strides in improving our scores company wide.
- Q.** When are Core Measures going away?
- A.** Core Measures are here to stay. Our goal is that these practices will become transparent and that they will be done routinely for our patients.
- Q.** What if a physician refuses to follow these best practices?
- A.** We couldn't imagine a physician not wanting to deliver the best care but understand that it's often difficult to change old habits. Reference binders have been placed in all hospitals as an easy source for physicians to review the medical literature that supports Core Measures. Additionally, medical staffs have a responsibility to monitor physicians' practices through peer review and assist them in becoming compliant.
- Q.** What is the role of the Board of Trustees regarding Core Measures?
- A.** The hospital Board has the ultimate responsibility for the hospital's medical staff. As such, they have the prerogative to monitor how physicians are doing, and direct the administrative team to address concerns regarding quality. In fact, we urge them to become more proactive in addressing these concerns.
- Q.** Why are Core Measures important?
- A.** CMS developed Core Measures not only to help hospitals improve, but also to promote transparency of information for consumers about healthcare providers. Public reporting of quality measures allows patients and their families to compare health care options and become more informed consumers. These measures allow physicians to validate the good work that they do. Also, they allow LifePoint Hospitals to prove the level of quality provided by our community hospitals and reassure patients that they don't have to leave the community to receive quality care.

Thank you for your cooperation and support of your hospital in its quality initiatives and continuing efforts to improve performance on Core Measures.