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Innovative Software Cuts Costs and Time for States to Report Hospital Quality Information to the Public

Press Release Date: June 3, 2010

The Department of Health & Human Services' (HHS's) Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) today unveiled MONAHRQ—My Own Network Powered by AHRQ—a free, MS® Windows®-based software application that significantly reduces the cost and time a State, hospital or other organization would need to spend to compile, analyze and post data on quality of hospital care, its cost and how that care is used. MONAHRQ allows users to create a customized Web site with data that can be used for internal quality improvement or reporting quality information to the public.

The cost of creating a Web site with this data is estimated to be \$300,000 or more, and the time required could be a year, according to States that tested MONAHRQ as it was being developed. With MONAHRQ, that time can be cut to a few days. Currently, many States require that quality data be reported publicly and other States are considering doing so. For example, the Hawaii Health Information Corporation, which tested MONAHRQ, plans to recommend that they use the AHRQ software application for that purpose.

A State, or other organization, referred to as the host user, can download MONAHRQ from AHRQ's Web site at <http://monahrq.ahrq.gov> and enter its own hospital administrative data, which includes such elements as patient characteristics, diagnoses, procedures, health insurance type and charges. MONAHRQ processes that information and then creates a Web site that the host user can customize by selecting a specific color scheme, inserting logos and using other features.

"Building on AHRQ's strong track record of developing innovative quality indicators and hospital reporting tools, MONAHRQ will revolutionize how States and others report data publicly or use it to improve health care quality," said AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D. "MONAHRQ also will help consumers make informed decisions about hospital care because they will have access to state-of-the-art information."

A Web site created using MONAHRQ will provide information in four areas:

- Quality of care for specific hospitals—provides information about patient safety, patient deaths in the hospital and other quality-related issues to answer questions such as, "Which hospitals have the lowest mortality rates after coronary bypass surgery?"
- Provision of services by hospital for health conditions and procedures—provides information about the number of patient discharges, charges, costs and length of hospitalizations for specific hospitals to answer questions such as, "Which hospitals perform the largest numbers of hip replacement surgeries? And what is the cost?"
- Potentially avoidable hospitalizations—creates maps of county-by-county rates for potentially avoidable hospitalizations to answer questions such as, "Which counties have the highest rates of hospitalization for uncontrolled diabetes? And how much could be saved if these rates were reduced?"
- Rates of health conditions and procedures—provides information about the prevalence of diseases or medical procedures through maps of county-by-county rates for selected conditions and procedures to answer questions such as, "Which counties have the highest rates of lung cancer?"

While they both provide information to the public on hospital quality, the Web sites generated by MONAHRQ users differ from HHS's Hospital Compare Web site because of the information that is reported. For example, MONAHRQ users provide information on elements of care that are not offered by Hospital Compare, including outcome measures of quality by individual hospital, such as patient safety events and deaths; data on which high-volume procedures are associated with better outcomes; and preventable hospitalizations by county on conditions for which good outpatient care could avert the need for a hospital stay.

MONAHRQ also is a completely different way of generating the information. Using the MONAHRQ software, users generate a custom Web site on hospital quality using a step-by-step approach to analyzing the data and generate a Web site that they can then host.

For more information, please contact AHRQ Public Affairs: (301) 427-1859 or (301) 427-1855.