



May 8, 2013: HHS Releases Data on Hospital Charges for 100 Common Medicare Inpatient Stays

On May 8, HHS posted data on the CMS website with information comparing hospitals' charges for services that may be provided during the 100 most common Medicare inpatient stays. These "charges" refer to what hospitals determine they will charge for items and services provided to patients; they do not, however, reflect the discounts that most hospitals have negotiated with health plans. These charges are most often experienced by patients without any other form of public or private insurance. The following is the Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project's response to this data release:

The Consumer-Purchaser Disclosure Project is encouraged by today's announcement by HHS that it is making information available on what hospitals charge for the 100 most common Medicare inpatient hospital visits. The data demonstrate the irrational hospital pricing system that negatively affects patients across the country; hospital charges vary dramatically depending where the patient receives care. Charges, however, are not indicative of the actual cost to most consumers or purchasers. What they need are real prices, i.e., what health plans are paying hospitals and physicians. Price transparency alone, however, will not be sufficient; we need to combine it with information on the quality of care and use it to identify and reward the best hospitals and physicians.

We anticipate that HHS's effort will create opportunities to educate and engage consumers in advocating for even greater transparency of cost data. For too many consumers and purchasers, the true value of care is still extremely difficult to assess when making health care decisions. We look forward to working with HHS, hospitals, physicians and health plans to make price and cost data available at the earliest opportunity.

Additional information on this can be found here:

- HHS News release: [Administration offers consumers an unprecedented look at hospital charges.](#)
- New York Times article: [Hospital Billing Varies Wildly, Government Data Shows.](#)
- National Public Radio (NPR) piece: [Dramatically Different Medicare Bills Set Hospitals Thinking.](#)
- NPR Planet Money piece: [Hospital Prices, Revealed! \(Sort of\).](#)