Consumer Health Ratings.com

your guide to online healthcare ratings

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FREE, TIME-SAVING WEB SITE IMPROVES CONSUMER HEALTHCARE DECISIONS

Oct. 3, 2006 (Verona, Wisc.)—The launch of a new Web site—www.consumerhealthratings.com—gives consumers quick, direct access to professional, credible, and reliable sources of information about healthcare costs and quality. Consumer Health Ratings is the first Web site to aggregate the quality ratings and cost comparisons for all types of health care nationwide.

The site guides consumers to a library of online healthcare ratings on such topic categories as Physician Licensure and Board Certification, Hospital Quality Ratings, Health Insurance Plan Ratings, Nursing Home Quality, Cost Comparisons, and Directories for doctors, dentists, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities. An additional category directs consumers to information on common diseases and conditions that drive utilization and costs.

"Few consumers realize how many health care report cards exist," says Gretchen Dahlen, President of The Dahlen Company, which offers ConsumerHealthRatings.com as a public service. "No one source is sufficient to give consumers all they need, given the variety of players—Federal and state governments, accrediting agencies, state hospital associations, employers/purchasing coalitions, insurers, and entrepreneurs, to name a few," says Dahlen.

She adds that nearly every state government shares physician licensing online for free. However, hospital and health plan information is often provided by a variety of non-profit associations, governments and employer groups, and consumers may be hard-pressed to find it. This is particularly the case for aging boomers who live in a different state than their parents and help with healthcare issues long distance. Likewise, some companies make quality and cost comparisons available only to their private members. Consumer Health Ratings provides general public access to reports and ratings that are free to everyone.

Most hospitals provide performance data on pneumonia, heart care, and surgical infection prevention. At www.consumerhealthratings.com, patients can learn where to check survival rates for additional conditions such as stroke, and view complications reported for pregnancy or hip surgery. In addition, there are price comparisons, lists of best doctors and hospitals, member satisfaction ratings for health insurance plans, and inspection reports comparing nursing homes.

"Consumers accessing www.consumerhealthratings.com may be surprised to discover which hospitals or health insurance plans exceed expectations, and which services rate below," says Dahlen. "They may also be surprised at the large variation in health care prices, even for something as common as prescription drugs."

Healthcare boards and corporate executives will benefit from the site's Education Center links to learn about current healthcare issues such as medical error reduction and community accountability. Leaders who want to influence healthcare policy can delve more deeply into healthcare costs and the uninsured.

Dahlen adds that the site gives the national transparency initiative and consumer-driven health care movement a boost. "Research is beginning to show, most consumers who know that healthcare report cards exist, will use them," says Dahlen.

"As deductibles increase and more Americans use health savings accounts (HSAs), more consumers search and comparison shop for affordable health care," Dahlen explains. "ConsumerHealthRatings.com allows consumers to prepare and plan ahead before they find themselves in an emergency room or needing hospitalization. They're able to take charge and improve their healthcare outcomes."

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About The Dahlen Company, LLC

ConsumerHealthRatings.com is a public service of The Dahlen Company, LLC, based in Verona, Wisc. The Dahlen Company provides management consulting services and seminars in Six Sigma quality, process improvement, and strategic planning and facilitates retreats for Boards and Executive Leadership.

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