AmeriHealth NEW JERSEY

PROVIDER BULLETIN

Bulletin #13-09

TO: Participating hospitals in New Jersey

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DATE: September 14, 2009

SUBJECT: New hospital locator and comparison tool for AmeriHealth members

We are sending this bulletin to inform you of upcoming changes to the hospital information that is available online to our providers and members.

NEW TOOL FOR HOSPITAL INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE

When members of AmeriHealth HMO, Inc. and its affiliates (AmeriHealth) search for hospitals on our consumer website, we presently display information about hospital quality from HealthGrades®, Inc. As you may know, HealthGrades analyzes available hospital discharge data from third-party sources to produce ratings for more than 100 hospital procedures and diagnoses, as well as patient safety.

This fall we will launch a redesigned amerihealthexpress.com — our consumer website — that will offer more extensive, easier-to-find, health care information to our members. A key advantage of the newly designed consumer website is that members will now be able to access tools and information that are relevant to their clinical needs. As part of this enhancement, we will be moving to a new tool for the display of hospital quality and safety information. The new tool is powered by WebMD®, a nationally known online source for health information and tools. With WebMD as the interface, members will be able to research and compare hospitals through the Hospital Finder tool based on procedure/diagnosis and location and will see more detail on process and outcomes results.

The Hospital Finder tool will also be available to providers through the NaviNet® web portal by selecting *Reference Material and Reports* from the Plan Transactions menu and then selecting *Provider Directory*. Prior to the launch of the redesign, you may take an advanced look at the features of this new tool. This preview will be available beginning September 25, 2009, on our website at www.amerihealth.com/HospitalFinder. The target date for members to see the new display tool is October 10, 2009.

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CALCULATING HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE

Hospital performance will be calculated using the Hospital Finder, which makes use of several core, third-party data sources to calculate hospital performance on various measures of quality and efficiency. The information that follows describes these sources and the measures they feed. The third-party sources that are used by WebMD to compile the ratings are similar to those used by HealthGrades. These include data from 23 states, including Pennsylvania and New Jersey, that require their acute-care hospitals to submit clinical discharge abstracts for all discharges. In addition, hospitals that participate in the Medicare Prospective Payment System program in all 50 states are required to submit abstracts — these data are called the MedPAR Limited Data Set files. WebMD licenses this data, and when comparisons are run on hospitals not located in an all-patient state, the Hospital Finder uses these MedPAR clinical data abstracts as the core input for calculating volume, mortality, complications, length-of-stay, and cost measures.

Quality measures from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the health services research arm of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, are then applied to the base data. AHRQ develops, publishes, and maintains definitions for more than 70 inpatient outcome, volume, and mortality measures for adult, medical, surgical, obstetric, and pediatric populations. The measures have been developed specifically for use with the clinical-data abstracts that WebMD licenses from various state and federal data sources. Each measure defines a denominator population (patients at risk) and a numerator population (patients with the outcome of interest) using detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria are intended to minimize the identification of false positives while maximizing identification of potential quality issues. The Hospital Finder makes use of indicators that are relevant to each diagnosis and procedure selected by the user, and the outcomes results are adjusted to account for differences in “severity of illness” of patients in a given hospital.

The Hospital Finder also incorporates several other sources of information, including the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Hospital Quality Alliance measures, Leapfrog Group Patient Safety Survey, the American Hospital Association Annual Survey, and the Joint Commission.

MEMBER-SPECIFIC SEARCH RESULTS

Users of the Hospital Finder are able to customize the way the results are displayed according to which measures (volume, mortality, complications, length-of-stay, and cost) are most important to them. Therefore, the results are unique to each member who uses the Hospital Finder.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions, please contact your Hospital/Ancillary Services Coordinator or call Customer Service at 1-800-275-2583. More information about specific features of the Hospital Finder tool and upcoming enhancements to our consumer website will be posted in future editions of *Partners in Health Update*℠.

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