FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE   **Contact:** AHCA Communications Office
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In Case You Missed It…

U.S. News and World Report: "Shopping for a Hip Replacement in Florida? Go by the Numbers"

For full story click HERE.

By Steve Sternberg, December 28, 2012

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Data tell the story; data that are recent and decent can help patients make informed choices about where to get surgery. Yet few patients can look at these important statistics. Few hospitals reveal them, and most states don't publish hospital-specific data, often blaming tight budgets and pushback from local hospitals and doctors.

Florida is an exception. Its Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) posts charge, length of stay, readmissions, and mortality data on FloridaHealthFinder.gov. U.S. News decided to examine Florida hip-replacement data as part of a long-term project that will assess how well the nation's hospitals perform relatively routine procedures. …

Hip replacement makes a good case study. The operation may be routine, but it's far from trivial. The operation demands precision. Moreover, all artificial hip joints are not equal. If the surgeon chooses a device that's less than optimal—perhaps because he had a hand in its design—the patient may pay the price.

Florida's data, from 2011, are unusually fresh, covering 184 hospitals that performed hip replacements last year. Hospitals must submit the data to AHCA as a licensing requirement. A contractor verifies the data, analyzes it, and returns it to the state for posting.

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Florida risk-adjusts its data sets in different ways. For readmission data, a proprietary approach from 3M is utilized; for mortality, a blend of ICD-9 codes and 3M APR-DRGs developed by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality is employed.

AHCA doesn't display all hip-replacement data together. Billed charges, length of stay, and readmissions are in one place; mortality data are separate, to rescue consumers from data overload. Each hospital gets two ratings: 1 to 3 stars for readmissions and 1 to 3 stars for mortality, with 1 star denoting the worst performers and 3 the best.

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