

Dartmouth Atlas Reporting at the Local Level



Iowa Health Buyers Alliance
Des Moines, Iowa
www.ihbaonline.org

Public Reporting

The Iowa Health Buyers Alliance (IHBA) is an association of health care customers (consumers and purchasers) working together for a patient centered health system, improved quality, wellness, and increased transparency and public disclosure.

Pursuing its goal of transparency and public disclosure, IHBA has produced a series of four consumer health guides to help patients ask good questions and to have information to use in choosing health care providers. The fourth guide in the series, “**Iowa Report Card – Ranking of Hospitals for Chronic Care**” was published in May 2009 based on data from the 2008 Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care. The four-page report is available at www.ihbaonline.org/documents/guide4.pdf.

The report is aimed at helping patients and their family members choose hospitals less likely to provide unnecessary stays in intensive care or visits with specialists in treating chronic illness at the end of life. It profiles fifty-three hospitals in the greater Iowa area using eight indicators showing spending, utilization, intensity, capacity and quality of care. The report also quoted seven action steps recommended by Consumer Reports for patients to follow in achieving good care for chronic illness. In addition to posting the report on its website, employer and union members of IHBA have distributed printed copies of the report to their covered employees/members. IHBA staff has also used the report as an information resource in meetings and as a member of health policy forums.

The consumer report is a summary of a more detailed report, “**Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care – Iowa Area Hospital Care Intensity Report**” produced for a state-wide conference in October 2008. This thirty-seven page report sorted the fifty-three hospitals into five geographic regions, and listed multiple indicators for:

- Spending – 6 indicators
- Intensity and Utilization – 9 indicators
- Capacity – 6 indicators
- Quality – 6 indicators

This report also ranked hospitals across the state and compared all indicators with the best decile for the nation. Seven Iowa hospitals are in the lowest decile of the hospital intensity index, sixteen are in the lowest quintile for the index. The state wide average of the hospital intensity statistic is at the 32.7 percentile for the nation. Iowa health care patterns for end of life care are among the most conservative for the nation. The final section of the report includes sample Atlas Profile reports for ten hospitals showing twenty-one indicators charted by their percentile level for the nation. Conference attendees received a printed copy of the report and heard presentations from David Goodman MD of Dartmouth and James Mortimer who compiled the Atlas data for the reports.

Copies of this report are available from Paul M. Pietzsch, Executive Director, 515-252-2530, Pietzsch@ihbaonline.org 6165 NW 86th Street, Johnston, IA 50131