

Methodology Changes for the Spring 2016 Hospital Safety Score

While the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Score methodology has changed slightly in previous rounds, three significant changes have been made for the Spring 2016 Hospital Safety Score. This document briefly explains these three changes.

Removal of Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) Measures

The five Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) measures have been removed from the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Score. Hospitals have ‘topped out’ on these measures and these measures will no longer be reported on CMS’ Hospital Compare.

Introduction of HCAHPS Measures

Before adding any measure to the Hospital Safety Score, Leapfrog evaluates the measure’s appropriateness for inclusion in the score. This evaluation includes: assessing the measure’s conceptual importance, reviewing the peer-reviewed evidence in support and opposition to the measure, and vetting the measure through a national panel of patient safety experts.

The HCAHPS survey is a measure of patient experience in the hospital; patient experience is often seen as different from patient satisfaction. Many of the HCAHPS domains target the exchange of information between the patients and their care team, a vital aspect of safe healthcare delivery. Without effective communication, providing safe and respectful care becomes extremely difficult. As such, the inclusion of HCAHPS measures in the Hospital Safety Score reflects an important component of patient safety.

Leapfrog conducted extensive literature reviews to assess the relationships between hospital performance on HCAHPS domains and the number of patient safety events. The literature identified a strong relationship for the five HCAHPS measures introduced to the Hospital Safety Score.¹⁻⁵ Additional HCAHPS domains were considered for inclusion in the score, but the available literature did not provide strong enough evidence to warrant their use.

Any measure that is considered for inclusion in the Hospital Safety Score is extensively vetted through a national panel of patient safety experts. The panel is composed of a mix of healthcare clinicians, researchers, and policy leaders from around the country. Our expert panel had extensive discussions about the inclusion of the HCAHPS domains in the Hospital Safety Score. After strong consideration of the literature and extensive internal discussions, the expert panel voiced support for including the five HCAHPS domains that have been added to the score.

Introduction of MRSA and C. diff Measures

Leapfrog has incorporated measures of hospital-onset, laboratory identified methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*) infections into the Spring 2016 Hospital Safety Score's methodology. Multidrug-Resistant Organisms (MDROs), including MRSA, have been shown to be associated with increased mortality, length of stay, and cost.⁶⁻⁸ Over 50% of all central line-associated bloodstream infections reported to NHSN in 2006-07 caused by *S. aureus* were MRSA. In recent years, a previously unrecognized strain of *C. difficile* with increased virulence and high levels of antimicrobial resistance has resulted in outbreaks in healthcare facilities in the United States.⁹⁻¹¹

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