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State adds new data to hospital costs Web site

Consumers can compare costs at health care facilities around the state

(Salem) — Oregonians can find the 2nd year of data online about the cost of services at hospitals throughout the state, the Department of Consumer and Business Services and the Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research announced today.

The Compare Hospital Costs Web site, at <http://www.oregon.gov/OHPPR/RSCH/comparehospitalcosts.shtml>, now includes cost data from 2006 and 14 new procedures and conditions, many of which deal with newborns.

The Web site, launched in August 2007, provides visitors with the average payment to Oregon hospitals for more than 90 medical procedures and conditions. The payments reflect discounts that insurers and hospitals negotiate, giving a clearer picture of what patients may expect to pay. In addition to the cost, the Oregon site also pairs cost and quality data for eight common procedures such as heart failure, pneumonia, and stroke.

“Oregon is one of the first states in the nation to make this kind of information available to the general public,” said Governor Kulongoski. “Knowing how much medical procedures will cost – and having information on quality – is crucial for Oregonians to make the best choices for themselves and their families.”

Oregon has received national attention for its efforts.

“States are well-positioned to drive transparency and quality in the health care system because of the multiple roles they play, from purchaser to regulator to convener,” said Brendan Krause, program director for health at the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. “Oregon’s effort to publish prices for health care services is strong evidence states can be leaders in this movement.”

On the Web site, consumers can choose a procedure or condition, such as normal newborn, select the hospitals they want information for, and then compare for each hospital the average and median cost for a normal newborn after delivery. The data used for these comparisons are calculated from the nine largest private health insurance carriers in Oregon. The information presented does not include Medicare, Oregon Health Plan, and self-pay patients.

Beth Eastman, interim bureau chief of the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration, says, “The Florida Agency for Health Care administration shares Oregon’s goal of making health care costs transparent, easily accessible and understandable to consumers. We applaud the success Oregon has had in providing health care cost information on their Web site.”

The Oregon Web site is part of a larger statewide effort to provide the public with clear information about both health care costs and quality. The Governor signed several transparency bills during the 2007 legislative session that the Department of Consumer and Business Services’ Insurance Division is implementing. The bills include House Bill 2213, which requires health insurers to provide consumers with advance estimates of how much they will have to pay for medical treatment, and House Bill 3103, which makes health insurance rate filings public as

soon as they are submitted to the state for review. The Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research publishes hospital quality indicators and is developing a program to report health care acquired infections to continue to inform consumers about the cost and quality of care in Oregon's hospitals.

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The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcb.s.oregon.gov.

The Office for Oregon Health Policy and Research is responsible for the development and analysis of health policy in Oregon and serves as the policymaking body for the Oregon Health Plan. The office provides analysis, technical, and policy support to assist the Governor and the Legislature in setting health policy.