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Contact: Monica Corbett
(850) 222-9800
monicac@fha.org

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT
Orlando Sentinel
My Word: Hospital Data Will be Easier to Use

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Bruce Rueben
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Lately, there has been much interest in hospital price transparency. The attention has centered on what hospitals do to provide patients with information that allows them to better know the cost of their care.

Florida hospitals have been providing price, cost and quality data to the state and federal governments for years. For example, we report extensive amounts of clinical-performance, financial and operational data to the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration and Department of Health.

There is a tremendous amount of information already available on hospital costs and prices, but, clearly, either people don't know about it or do not find the data easy to use.

That is why the Florida Hospital Association is working on a new website that will display this data in a publicly available, easy-to-use format. The goal is to provide useful data that help people make health-care decisions.

Absent from the recent discussion are two critical facts: Most health care is provided outside of hospitals, and most of the best health-care data reside with health-insurance plans.

States like Colorado and New Hampshire collect the most complete health-care data sets through All Payer Claims Databases. Florida should do the same in order to better understand the true cost of care and how to improve access to high-quality services.

Utilizing comprehensive data can help us understand the impact of big cost drivers like treatment of the uninsured, prescription drugs, defensive medicine, health-care pricing policies and a newly emerging challenge to patients: the financial consequence of lower-cost health insurance based on narrow provider networks.

An APCD will provide the most effective source of usable data to improve health-care costs, access and quality in Florida. But FHA-member hospitals are not waiting to deliver on our responsibility to provide useful price and performance information.

We are ready to work with all stakeholders, including providers, insurers, consumers, the business community, lawmakers and state officials, to improve the usefulness of the data we provide today. Hospital data is a good start, but we must work toward a more comprehensive data set that captures the full scope of where we invest our health-care dollars. Collaboration and a good-faith effort by all stakeholders is the best approach to improving our understanding of the cost and value of Florida health care.

Bruce Rueben is president of the Florida Hospital Association, which represents more than 200 hospitals and health systems across the state.

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/os-ed-florida-hospital-transparency-myword-100615-20151005-story.html>

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About the Florida Hospital Association

The Florida Hospital Association is comprised of over 200 hospitals and health systems from across the state. Through representation and advocacy, education, and informational services, we support the mission of our members to provide the highest quality of care to the patients we serve. For more information, visit www.fha.org