COMPARING VA AND NON-VA MEDICAL CENTERS: INFORMING VETERAN HEALTH CARE CHOICE AT THE MISSION ACT WATERSHED

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• Conducts research and outreach for communities and professionals who serve military and veteran families
• Operates Measuring Communities public database

• Performs research and analysis to shape and elevate the national security and foreign policy debate in Washington and beyond
• 7 research programs, including Military, Veterans, and Society

• Mission: To discover, disseminate, and apply knowledge to promote the public’s health at home and abroad
• Vision: To achieve equitable and sustainable local to global health
GOALS

PROJECT AND DELIVERABLES

**Project:**
- Identify a reasonable comparator for every full-service VA medical center in the U.S.
- Compare in terms of clinical and patient experience measures

**Deliverables:**
- Data point in Measuring Communities
- Working paper published by CNAS
- Article for peer review
VETERAN HEALTH CARE

VETERAN CHOICE ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY CARE

- More than 30 day waiting period for care
- Live more than 40 miles from nearest VA facility
- No road access to nearest VA
- “Unusual or excessive burden” in accessing care
- No full-service VA in the state
VETERAN HEALTH CARE

MISSION ACT ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY CARE:

- Service not available at any VA medical facility
- No full-service VA in the state
- Grandfathered into distance eligibility under Choice Program
- VA can’t furnish within access standards
- Clinician recommendation
- Does not comply with quality standards
OUR PROCESS

Met in DC with relevant stakeholders → Chose measures → Chose predictors → Selected comparators

Located data sets of each for VA and non-VA → Revised measures based on availability → Compared at aggregate level → Compared one-to-one
OUR PROCESS

1. Met in DC with relevant stakeholders
2. Chose measures
3. Chose predictors
4. Selected comparators

5. Located data sets of each for VA and non-VA
6. Revised measures based on availability
7. Compared at aggregate level
8. Compared one-to-one
MEASURES

CLINICAL MEASURES

- **IMM-2**: % admitted patients screened and administered flu vaccine
- **PSI 04**: Preventable surgical deaths per 1000 surgical discharges
- **CAUTI**: Catheter-associated urinary tract infections per 1000 device days
- **MRSA**: Infections per 1000 bed days
**Patient Experience Measures**

**CTM-3**
- % patients who respond “strongly agree” to 3 composite questions

**HCAHPS #18**
- % patients who give hospital a 9 or 10 rating on 10-point scale

**HCAHPS #19**
- % patients who “would definitely recommend” hospital to friends and family
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Characteristics of Hospitals Demonstrating Superior Performance in Patient Experience and Clinical Process Measures of Care

William G. Lehrman
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, Maryland

Marc N. Elliott
RAND, Santa Monica, California

Elizabeth Goldstein
Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Baltimore, Maryland

Megan K. Beckett
COMPARING HOSPITALS

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Demographics:

- Bed size
- Rural/urban
- Census division
- Ownership
- Teaching status
- % Medicare patient days

Measures:

- HCAHPS (patient experience)
- HQA (clinical)

### Choosing Comparators

#### Our Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Comparators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>• American Hospital Association (AHA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>• AEI VA MISSION Act Access Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed size</td>
<td>• AHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural-Urban Continuum Code</td>
<td>• OMB urban/rural designation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching status</td>
<td>• AHA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OUR PROCESS

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7. Compared at aggregate level
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RESULTS - CLINICAL

COMPARING GROUPS

IMM-2
% admitted patients screened and administered flu vaccine
VA<Civilian

PSI 04
Preventable surgical deaths per 1000 surgical discharges
VA>Civilian

CAUTI
Catheter-associated urinary tract infections per 1000 device days
VA=Civilian

MRSA
Infections per 1000 bed days
VA=Civilian
RESULTS – PATIENT EXPERIENCE

COMPARING GROUPS

CTM-3
% patients who respond “strongly agree” to 3 composite questions

VA>Civilian

HCAHPS #18
% patients who give hospital a 9 or 10 rating on 10-point scale

VA<Civilian

HCAHPS #19
% patients who “would definitely recommend” hospital to friends and family

VA=Civilian
OUR PROCESS

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RESULTS

COMPARING ONE-TO-ONE

- IMM 2
- PSI 04
- CAUTI
- MRSA
- CTM-3
- HCAHPS #18
- HCAHPS #19

Legend:
- VA>civilian
- VA=civilian
- VA<civilian

Graph shows comparative data for each category with bars representing different categories.
RESULTS

COMPARING ONE-TO-ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>VA≥civilian</th>
<th>VA≤civilian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMM 2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSI 04</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAUTI</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRSA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTM-3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCA HPS #18</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Strengths and limitations

- Provides us with a starting point to compare care post-MISSION Act, pre-COVID-19 and post-COVID-19.

- Many medical centers were missing information for one or more measures; this left some measures with less medical center information than is desirable for a robust study.

What did we learn?

- VA medical centers are still an excellent choice for Veterans

- VA medical centers as a whole can still make improvements in some clinical and some patient experience measures.
Implications for Veterans

- Veterans may consider VA care if they haven’t in the past, especially in a time of uncertainty in the health care system.
- Similarly, Veterans who experience long drives or wait times should check VA Hospital Compare (accesstocare.va.gov)
- If they are considering their nearest similar comparator, they will be able to find this on in the Measuring Communities website (measuringcommunities.org)

Future Directions

- We will continue to collect data on these measures as they are released
- Future analysis will need to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the VA medical system and the U.S. health care system as a whole.
DOMAINS OF INTEREST

- Medical Care
- Financial
- Employment
- Behavioral Health
- K-12 Education
- Post-Secondary Education
- Community Attributes
- Housing
- Legal

Measuring Communities
INDICATORS AND DATA

Indicators

• Measurement of some aspect of the domain
• Feature to help understand the context or geography of where SMVF live
• Multiple indicators for each domain

Data

• 30+ different data sources from reliable and nationally representative
• Updated at least yearly with some more frequently
• Data source listed under each indicator
New York
VA 1:1 comparison

This study, a partnership between the Military Family Research Institute (MFRI) at Purdue University and the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), provided one-to-one comparisons of care quality in VA and nearby non-VA medical centers. One nearby comparator hospital was identified for each full-services VA medical center in the United States using a set of demographic criteria: size, rurality, teaching status, ownership, and proximity. Data was available for us to be able to compare 128 VA medical centers and their comparators.

We compared three clinical outcomes (in-hospital surgical deaths per 1,000 surgical discharges, catheter infections per 1,000 service days, and MRSA infections per 1,000 bed days) and three patient experience outcomes ("definitely recommend" hospital to family and friends, discharge instructions and overall hospital ratings).

How did the hospitals do?

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

Catheter infections per 1,000 days*

- VA better
- Civilian better
- Same

MRSA infections per 1,000 bed days*

- VA better
- Civilian better
- Same

Surgical deaths per 1,000 discharges*

- VA better
- Civilian better
- Same

PATIENT EXPERIENCE OUTCOMES

Definitely recommend to others*

- VA better
- Civilian better
- Same

Discharge instructions*

- VA better
- Civilian better
- Same

Overall hospital ratings*

- VA better
- Civilian better
- Same

*only one set available

*only seven sets available

*only six sets available
https://measuringcommunities.org/
CONTACT INFORMATION

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