



Principles for Reporting Health Care Associated Infection Data to the Public

March 9, 2006

The Minnesota Alliance for Patient Safety (MAPS) believes that public reporting of health care associated infections will provide consumers with important information for making decisions about their health care and will help drive process improvements to reduce the incidence of these infections.

In order to provide the most useful information possible, we believe that infection reporting measures need to be clearly defined, accurate, valid, understandable, comparable when applied across settings, and consistent with current state and national standards. Reported measures should be facility-specific, beginning with hospitals and outpatient surgical centers; the reporting also needs to use understandable language and be useful to consumers.

While there is interest in moving forward with the reporting of health care associated infections, there is also an awareness of the importance of providing data that meets the criteria listed above. Taking this into account, MAPS supports a staged-approach to infection reporting. This would begin with evidence-based infection prevention process measures, for which there is national consensus, and move to reporting of health care associated infections when national standards¹ have been developed.

There is current state and federal legislation calling for the collection and reporting of prevention process measures with the start of public reporting mandated by October 2007 for state reporting and possibly sooner for reporting at the federal level. Health care providers should focus efforts on fully meeting these current state and federal reporting mandates, while monitoring the progress of the National Quality Forum and other national and state standards efforts. There should also be public-private dialogue on the mechanism for reporting these measures. Existing reporting mechanisms should be leveraged as much as possible.

¹ *An example of national standards is the work that the National Quality Forum (NQF) is currently undertaking to develop infection rate reporting standards. The NQF is a voluntary consensus standard setting organization created to standardize quality measurement and reporting. The NQF is the organization that developed standards of measure for adverse event reporting, which Minnesota has adopted and is now publicly reporting.*