



South Dakota
Association of Healthcare Organizations

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Health

May 29, 2008

Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Responds to a May
6, 2008, letter

Dear Honorable Chairman:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in your Committee's discussion on healthcare-associated infections. The South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations (SDAHO) does not have a dedicated division within the Association dedicated to quality. Please appreciate that South Dakota is a very rural state with a population of about 780,000 and this Association is sized to reflect this state's capacity and needs. SDAHO has a total staff of 9. Our general approach is to work collaboratively with our members and several other public and private organizations on quality and patient safety issues. In addition, SDAHO staff work with our members to address issues and help them in collaborative opportunities in all areas of quality.

Currently all of our hospitals collaborate with the state's Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) and the JCAHO-accredited facilities also work with the Joint Commission on quality initiatives. At the Association level we work with the American Hospital Association, the National Quality Forum, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement to move the quality discussion forward at the national and state levels.

In response to your specific questions:

1. SDAHO does not request or receive specific quality data from its member hospitals. The individual hospitals all have quality staff that do internal review and use their data to improve the quality of care.
2. We do not have plans to replicate the Michigan model. We are interested in working with our members to improve quality and, given our resources, we do provide education and training in targeted areas concerning quality.
3. All South Dakota hospitals have active quality programs; they all work with the QIO. The SDAHO is currently working with the QIO on a Rural Hospital Patient Safety Collaborative with 37 of the hospitals participating. This two-year program has identified specific areas of patient safety at each hospital that they are currently addressing. At the state level we will be assisting them through targeted education and focused conferences to bring in experts in the areas that directly impact all of the hospitals.

We would welcome focus and direction concerning national best practices standards and will be interested in the recommendations coming from you and your Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David R. Hewett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

David R. Hewett
President/CEO

cc: Tom Davis, Ranking Minority
Senator Tim Johnson
Senator John Thune
Representative Stephanie Herseth-Sandlin