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For Immediate Release

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South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services launches transparency website
Phase one of new tool helps users identify and interpret hospital financial and operational trends

Columbia, SC – In support of its goal to improve the value of health care delivered in South Carolina and meet the health care transparency requirements of Proviso 33.34 passed last year by the South Carolina Legislature, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) this week launched a new health care data website, SCHealthData.org.

Phase one of the new tool allows users to compare key measures of financial performance for hospitals across South Carolina and identify trends in hospital performance. Intuitive mapping, graphing and comparison tools make comparing hospitals across the state as simple as a few mouse clicks. For example, a visitor to the site would find that in 2012 South Carolina hospitals reported occupancy rates ranging from 7 percent to 84 percent, with an overall statewide occupancy rate of 61 percent.

“We’re excited to launch SCHealthData and deliver this valuable data in a way that will help citizens, journalists and policy makers better understand health care in South Carolina during this time of immense change,” said SCDHHS Director Tony Keck. “This is an important step in the ongoing conversation about how we deliver and pay for care in our state and across the country, and how we can purchase the most health at the least cost.”

Lack of consumer access to prices, quality and cost is considered an important contributor to excess health care spending in the United States. As patients are increasingly responsible for more out-of-pocket health care costs, it is critical that they have easy access to information to make informed choices.

SCHealthData.org is being developed in collaboration with the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA).

“As the new website clearly demonstrates, hospital profits vary from year to year,” said SCHA President Thornton Kirby.

“Profitability is an important measure of each hospital's financial health. Our state's hospital leaders believe that South Carolinians should have the information they need to understand the health care system and to make better decisions concerning their own health care.”

Added Kirby: “That is why we are working with SCDHHS to make information available. As hospitals make up about one-third of total health spending, we look forward to our continued work with SCDHHS to expand the scope of SCHealthData.org to provide South Carolinians the best source for information about health care costs.”

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In addition to showing visualizations and statistical comparisons between hospitals based on federal cost report data submitted to SCDHHS, the website provides several other hospital data resources that provide insight into hospital operations. Those resources include Community Health Needs Assessments, which all charitable hospitals are now required to produce under the federal Affordable Care Act. SCHealthData.org also features links to other health care transparency resources from South Carolina and across the country.

In future phases, SCHealthData.org will further empower consumers by posting payment data for common hospital procedures, as well as validated data on hospital quality. Similar data for other health care providers will also be incorporated.

SCHealthData.org is complemented by [SC HealthViz](#), a recently launched South Carolina population health data website designed to provide greater transparency in state Medicaid data.

Visit SCHealthData at [SCHealthData.org](#) and follow [@SCHealthData](#) on Twitter

By the Numbers

Check out some of the statewide data points based on information available on SCHealthData.org. Data is aggregated by hospital fiscal years, with the exception of Disproportionate Share Hospital payments, which are based on federal fiscal years. Hospital fiscal years vary depending on the hospital or hospital system.

- More than half of South Carolina hospitals reported fewer bed days in 2012 than 2011.
- South Carolina hospitals reported occupancy rates ranging from 7 percent to 84 percent in 2012 and the overall occupancy rate for South Carolina hospitals in 2012 was 61 percent.
- South Carolina hospitals' 2012 bottom lines varied widely by hospital, with profits (or revenues in excess of expenses for not-for-profit hospitals) as high as \$159,745,573 and losses as much as \$20,556,997.
- Overall, South Carolina hospitals' aggregate profits (or revenue in excess of expenses) increased 44 percent in 2012 vs. 2011.
- On average, 17 percent of South Carolina hospitals' occupied bed days in 2012 were for Medicaid patients, 53 percent for Medicare patients, and 30 percent for patients with commercial insurance, self-paying, or with no means of reimbursement.
- South Carolina hospitals received \$2,016,502,156 in Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital payment funds (payments provided by SCDHHS to offset uncompensated care provided by hospitals for the uninsured) between 2008 and 2012.

About the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provides health care benefits to more than one million South Carolinians. Its mission is to purchase the most health for our citizens in need at the least possible cost to the taxpayer.

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