



26 February 2010

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Private Health Insurance Funds Welcome Hospital Ranking

The Australian Health Insurance Association (AHIA) is very supportive of any plans by the Rudd Government to publish information on the performance of our hospitals.

Chief Executive Officer, Dr Michael Armitage, said the AHIA had long been advocating for improved transparency on the basis that international studies show the publication of information on individual hospitals leads to better informed consumers, resulting in improved health outcomes.

“The AHIA welcomes any move by the Government to implement this concept. We believe that all Australians should be able to access information on the performance of our health system, including the publication of Hospital Standardised Mortality Rates, infection rates and readmission rates in both the Public and the Private Sectors.

“This is information which is freely available to health consumers in many countries overseas, and Australians should not be denied access to the same basic information which will allow them to make important decisions about their treatment and care.

“We know that hospital performance can be appropriately risk-adjusted and we know that Australians want this information made available to them,” Dr Armitage said.

Market Research conducted on behalf of the AHIA last year showed that an overwhelming number of Australians want to know more about hospital performance. Those surveyed were told that the risk-adjusted performance of individual hospitals and hospital doctors throughout Australia can be measured in terms of rates of infection, success rates of operations and so on.

They were asked whether these performance tables should be publicly available for individual access and an overwhelming 74% said they agreed. They were then asked whether they would like to know the rate of golden staph infection in individual hospitals and 83% responded positively.

“Australia’s health care system is among the best in the world. However, international experience demonstrates that transparency improves health outcomes for consumers. Public reporting gives hospitals more reason to enhance their own efforts to improve safety and quality. Thereby, public reporting can be a win-win for consumers and hospitals,” said Dr Armitage.

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