



Statement

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The Leapfrog Group

CMS Proposes to Suppress The Data on 25,000 Preventable Hospital Deaths Last Year. We Say No.

The Leapfrog Group strongly opposes the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) proposal to suppress data on preventable complications that kill 25,000 people a year in American hospitals. If CMS is not stopped, this would be a giant leap backward in patient safety and a violation of the trust we place in the federal government to alert the public to threats to health and safety.

The data targeted for suppression includes rates of serious complications from surgery like sepsis and kidney harm, along with preventable complications from medical care such as deep bed sores, lung collapse, and blood clots.

Having the information from CMS to choose among hospitals is critical because some hospitals are more dangerous than others. For instance, patients are four times more likely to die from a preventable blood clot, twice as likely to suffer a deep pressure ulcer (bedsore), and nine times more likely to have a surgical hemorrhage if they choose the worst performing hospital instead of the best. Racial disparities mean comparison among hospitals is even more critical for people of color. For instance according to a groundbreaking study from the [Urban Institute](#), Black patients had significantly higher risk of suffering many of these complications compared with white patients. *(A description of the complications, death rates, racial disparities, and variation among hospitals is available [here](#)).*

Just two months ago, leaders at CMS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that since 2020, federal data shows a significant increase in the number of common hospital infections and patient safety mistakes occurring during the pandemic. These federal officials have the data, but now want to suppress much of it from the American public.

In early May, the HHS Office of the Inspector General (OIG), an independent governmental watchdog, investigated Medicare and concluded CMS was not reporting enough of the errors and complications that harm Medicare beneficiaries. The OIG report recommended CMS report more of the harms patients suffer, and CMS agreed. But instead, CMS proposes to do the opposite, reducing the harms they report by suppressing ten of them and threatening to suppress even more.

We are calling on citizens and advocacy organizations to write letters and sign our letter in opposition to the CMS proposal to suppress the data on these hospital complications.