

## Making Clinical and Claims Data Transparent to Improve Healthcare in Cincinnati

*The Health Collaborative is a member of the Network for Regional Healthcare Improvement (NRHI) and a partner with the Center for Healthcare Transparency*

The Health Collaborative is a multi-stakeholder convening organization based in Cincinnati, Ohio, delivering cross-sector solutions and health improvement pilot projects to the region. Its services include a robust set of improvement-oriented benefits to its membership, which includes 30 hospital and health systems, 150 long-term care facilities and more than 100 select business partners. HealthBridge, a service line of The Health Collaborative offers product lines including consulting, education, convening and health technology solutions that enable stakeholders to make smarter decisions to enhance patient care and lower health care costs for customers in and outside of the Greater Cincinnati region. Additionally, The Health Collaborative serves as the community's neutral forum for all local stakeholders invested in the triple aim; better health, better care and lower cost.

As part of its reporting and transparency work, The Health Collaborative operates [YourHealthMatters.org](https://YourHealthMatters.org) – an online tool for providers, insurers and health care consumers to compare quality ratings of local doctors and hospitals. YourHealthMatters provides Greater Cincinnati with a neutral and trusted resource for objective, evidenced-based information about the quality of care provided by health care providers in the community in the areas of diabetes care, cardiovascular health, hypertension and colon cancer screenings, as well as patient survey results and resources to engage and empower consumers to make better informed healthcare decisions.

[YourHealthMatters.org](https://YourHealthMatters.org) is the only rating tool in the Greater Cincinnati area that uses and aggregates the standardized and validated Group-Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CG-CAHPS) survey method to capture and report patient experience data – other rating tools rely on patients self-selecting to provide online feedback.

Nearly 600 area providers and 22 hospitals voluntarily participate in this initiative by providing their patient data and patient survey results to The Health Collaborative for analysis and reporting on YourHealthMatters.

### *A Collaborative Approach to Achieving Transparency*

True to the saying, “what gets measured gets improved,” The Health Collaborative believes that measuring outcomes and reporting provider performance improves quality and empowers patients to make more informed choices. While much evidence shows this to be true, getting providers to agree to publically

share their patient data can be difficult. That's why The Health Collaborative worked closely with providers and other stakeholders from the very beginning to develop the YourHealthMatters tool.

"Transparency of health data not only helps consumers make informed choices about their care but it also helps providers see opportunities where they can improve," said Craig Brammer, CEO of The Health Collaborative. "That was ultimately our goal: to work together as a community and connect the dots between better health and better health care."

Brammer said trust was achieved in Cincinnati because the providers weren't treated as adversaries or singled-out for performance. Rather, doctors and hospitals were given "ownership of the transparency agenda," something he says was key in helping to promote collaboration and reduce hesitancy to share data.



**Craig Brammer, CEO  
The Health Collaborative**

Today, YourHealthMatters.org sees nearly 2,000 visits each month, and a large portion of the audience is physicians looking to see how they and their practices compare with others. "Physicians want to see who is performing well across all patient experience and quality measure categories, and it incentivizes them to improve," says Brammer. For example, physicians use YourHealthMatters to see how they compare in helping their patients achieve diabetes care measures such as controlling blood pressure, reducing cholesterol levels, and remaining tobacco-free.

Similarly, consumers and patients check these ratings and are also guided to areas of the site educating them about a number of topics to empower them to be informed consumers of their health care. "Our local research, as well as national findings in this area of work, shows that consumers don't yet think about comparing the cost and quality of healthcare like they do cars or air conditioners," Brammer said. "It may be some time until consumers are really 'shopping' for health care, but YourHealthMatters aims to help them get there."

### ***The Power of Combining Clinical Data with Claims Data***

In 2012, The Health Collaborative was chosen to facilitate technical assistance for 75 local primary care practices participating in the [Comprehensive Primary Care Initiative](#) (CPC) in Greater Cincinnati. The CPC program is a four-year demonstration project designed to test the impact of enhanced primary care support and payment reform on health outcomes and overall cost of care. The goal is to improve providers' capacity to coordinate care for complex patients, as well as deliver greater emphasis on prevention, wellness, and the management of chronic conditions.

Greater Cincinnati is one of only seven regions across the country selected to participate in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) initiative, and is the nation's largest demonstration site with 220,000 patients. The initiative brings Medicare together with 8 commercial and state health insurance plans to

provide the practices with funding for preventive care and more coordinated chronic disease management with the expected outcomes of fewer avoidable emergencies and hospitalizations.

Brammer says so far, that's exactly what's happening. From implementation of the project in November, 2012 through September, 2014, the participating CPC practices in the Cincinnati region have realized an 8 percent reduction in overall hospital admissions, 10 percent reduction in primary care treatable admissions, 3 percent reduction in readmissions, and a 3.4 percent reduction in overall expenditures.

Brammer added that The Health Collaborative is learning more about quality and the drivers of increased costs through the aggregation of claims data that will inform its other improvement and transparency work down the road.

### ***The Challenges of Funding a Public Good***

While The Health Collaborative continues to make progress in Cincinnati toward that triple aim; better health, better care and lower cost, finding reliable and sustainable funding is an ongoing challenge.

Federal health IT-focused grants have been a major component in the health information exchange development in particular. Brammer suggests that to make neutral and transparent information sustainable overtime, additional federal support may be needed.

"Everybody loves the idea of reliable and transparent information," he says, "but like many public goods, nobody wants to pay for it. "I think the government may have a bigger role to play in supporting transparency in the future."