



**EMBARGOED UNTIL:** 6 AM, ET, January 8, 2014

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## **CONSUMER REPORTS TEAMS WITH CHPI TO RATE 170 PHYSICIAN GROUPS**

### **Consumer Reports and California Healthcare Performance Information System (CHPI) Jointly Release Evaluations of Statewide Doctors' Groups**

YONKERS, NY; SAN FRANCISCO, CA; and OAKLAND, CA — Consumer Reports has teamed up with the California Healthcare Performance Information System (CHPI) to release physician ratings for 170 primary and specialty care physician groups throughout the state. The ratings are featured in a special February 2014 edition of Consumer Reports and are intended to help California consumers choose their physician groups—and ultimately help individuals to select the medical practices and doctors that provide the best quality of care.

The ratings were compiled by CHPI ([chpis.org](http://chpis.org)), a nonprofit collaborative that administers the nation's largest system for evaluating and publishing physician group ratings based on the patient's experience. This is the fourth time since 2012 that Consumer Reports has teamed up with a regional health care group to rate physician groups; previously, CR did it in Massachusetts, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Consumer Reports is distributing a special version of the magazine for its subscribers and newsstands in California. The cover will highlight the story "How Does Your Doctor Compare?" and contain an 11-page insert with the ratings of physicians' groups.

The physician ratings report is also available at the newly re-launched [calqualitycare.org](http://calqualitycare.org), where consumers can learn about the performance of medical groups, hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities in California.

The ratings are derived from CHPI's annual Patient Assessment Survey (PAS), which has been administered for more than a decade in California to measure patient experience with physician groups. The 2013 survey included 58,873 adult patients across California, all of whom had commercial health insurance. The findings provide important information from the patient's perspective about how well physicians communicate with their patients, coordinate medical care, and provide access to routine and urgent care, as well as how patients rate their care overall. The survey also asks patients about their experiences with the office staff, such as receptionists, and the people who handle billing and insurance-related questions.

“California primary care and specialty doctors deserve applause for their support in the collection of these data,” said John Santa, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center. “Making it public, and collaborating with Consumer Reports and CHPI makes it widely available to consumers. They are among the first in the nation to do so.” Dr. Santa adds that sharing performance data among providers is important because it generates conversations among doctors about techniques to improve the quality of care to their patients.

“Through our collaboration with Consumer Reports, this will be the first year that the PAS survey data will be widely distributed in print to consumers in California. This increased level of transparency is important as it provides Californians with a trusted source in which to choose doctors and physician groups based on patient assessments of their care.” said CHPI Corp. Board President Tom McCaffery.

Consumers can use this special California Report to see how physician groups line up and to better understand what to expect and ask for at the doctor's office in order to improve their own care and strengthen their relationship with their doctor. The ratings demonstrate that all physician groups had room to improve their patients' experiences, and that experiences vary significantly based on which physician group they go to. For example, in certain areas of Los Angeles, patients' ratings of their overall care ranged from 51 to 73 percent, meaning that half of patients of the lowest rated physician groups did not think their care experience was the best possible.

The good news is scores for physician groups in California have been on the upswing in recent years. The ratings also reveal that regardless of where an individual may live in the Golden State, he or she is close to at least one high-scoring group, with some low-scoring groups probably also nearby.

Here's a look at some of the other findings from the California medical group analysis:

- **Fifty-four percent of survey respondents said their doctor was always informed and up-to-date about the care they received from other doctors.** Consumer Reports recommends that patients make sure doctors know about the care they get from other providers, including other physicians as well as acupuncturists, chiropractors, herbalists, and other alternative health-care practitioners, and make sure they coordinate with your doctor as well. That can help to improve the quality of care and avoid duplicative care.
- **Sixty-three percent said someone always followed up with them to provide results on blood tests, X-rays, or other tests.** Consumer Reports recommends that patients should call if they don't get test results in a timely manner, or when their doctor promised them. And they should also request a written copy for their files. Some groups use a secure online portal that provides access to test results and other information.
- **Sixty-two percent said the front-office staff was always as helpful as they should be.** Patients should have patience, but let the staff know, politely but firmly, if they need more help. Patients who ask for more help are likely to get it. If they don't get the help they need, they should follow up with the office manager or doctor.
- **Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents in Northern California said they always got the timely care and service they needed, compared to fifty-four percent of patients in the Southern part of the state.** The individual physician group scores show that there were high performing groups in all parts of the state. Consumer Reports recommends that patients use the individual physician group scores to select groups that provide the most timely care available.

The report also indicates that patients sometimes experience challenges when it comes to scheduling and seeing their doctor in a timely way. Some highlights include:

- **Twenty-six percent** said their doctors did not always spend enough time with them.

- **Forty percent** said they did not always get an appointment for care they needed right away.
- **Sixty-four percent** said they were not always seen by their provider within 15 minutes of their appointment time (including time spent in the waiting room and exam room).

The full ratings report is available in the special February 2014 issue of Consumer Reports magazine for California, and online at [calqualitycare.org](http://calqualitycare.org), a free, easy-to-use source for information about the performance of medical groups, hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities in California. Produced by the California HealthCare Foundation (CHCF), a nonprofit philanthropy, the site offers ‘one-stop shopping’, making it easy to find and compare providers on a range of measures, including patient experience with medical groups and office staff, nursing home staffing levels, and hospital quality, including ER wait times.

“Californians now have a single source for ratings of hospitals, long-term care facilities and medical groups,” said Andy Krackov, senior program officer at CHCF. “Just like Consumer Reports, CalQualityCare provides information that is tested and unbiased, helping users make smart choices about where to receive care.”

Additionally, CHCF is teaming with CHPI and Consumer Reports to pilot a project that allows consumers to rate their own doctors through a short online survey, available at [ConsumerReports.org/cro/caldocs](http://ConsumerReports.org/cro/caldocs). This survey will be part of a research project to study how best to get consumer input into doctor performance.

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### **About Consumer Reports**

Consumer Reports is the world’s largest independent product-testing organization. Using its more than 50 labs, auto test center, and survey research center, the nonprofit rates thousands of products and services annually. Founded in 1936, Consumer Reports has over 8 million subscribers to its magazine, website and other publications. Its advocacy division, Consumers Union, works for health reform, product safety, financial reform, and other consumer issues in Washington, D.C., the states, and in the marketplace.

### **About California Healthcare Performance Information System (CHPI)**

The California Healthcare Performance Information System (CHPI) is a nonprofit, public benefit corporation whose mission is to serve as a trusted source of health care data to measure the quality and affordability of care, report performance ratings to and educate the public about health care value, and drive improvements in health care in California. CHPI produces ratings of California physician groups to help Californians choose health care they can trust. CHPI is a collaborative of California health care purchasers, plans, providers, and consumers.

### **About the California HealthCare Foundation**

The California HealthCare Foundation works as a catalyst to fulfill the promise of better health care for all Californians. We support ideas and innovations that improve quality, increase efficiency, and lower the costs of care. For more information, visit [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org).

**JANUARY 2014**

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