

Selected comments from the MicroBytes readers...

Should hospitals be required by law to publicly report infection rates, surgical complications, and medication errors?

YES – 95%

This is a great way for the consumer to know how well the hospital is managing contamination.

I do not see why they shouldn't. We all strive for better quality.

Results that are monitored and reported to the public could serve as an incentive for hospitals to lower their rate or provide awareness that current methods are adequate.

Why should health care be exempt from reporting errors? If they are going to make health a business, make them comply with industry standards.

The key to improvement is transparency coupled with public education.

Absolutely and it should be posted on large signs at every entrance. Their services are not free by any means and the patient must know what type of service to expect. 100,000 patients die each year due to medical errors. My God, it's an epidemic and is out of control.

Yes, absolutely; I thought they already were!

Reporting will help us to understand and combat these issues in the future.

This already applies in the UK.

This will make hospitals work harder in eliminating/reducing these problems.

This is the only way to prevent HAI's.

This would let a potential patient know how carefully their family members need to monitor their care by careless healthcare workers... Nosocomials are no fun!!

NO – 5%

Not until the publicly reported data can be interpreted in a meaningful way by the public. Just giving a huge list of numbers is not helpful. Institutions that perform risky procedures on high risk patients will have higher numbers than those that do not. The report needs to be fair and simple to understand.

No, but they should keep available records (infection rates, surgical complications and medical errors) for their patients and patients to be. Therefore (1) patients will be better equipped to choose a hospital, and (2) because of potential public scrutiny of the records, the hospitals will be compelled to take any problems with their performance seriously.

If the data was gathered equivalently, but each institution can create their own data and the Feds just "do the numbers", and honesty is not rewarded.