July 27, 2015

Commonwealth Fund Quality-Spending Interactive Methodology FAQ

How many quality measures are included and what settings do they cover?
The interactive includes 22 quality measures covering four care settings. There are nine quality measures that assess care provided in hospitals; six assessing outpatient physician care; four assessing nursing home care; and three assessing home health care.

How should I interpret the quality measure performance score?
For each state or hospital referral region (HRR), the achieved performance on each measure has been rescaled (indexed) relative to the measure's median value. First, we calculated the median value across all U.S. states (or HRRs). Then, we divided the location's achieved performance on a measure by the median value for that measure to calculate a ratio score. On this "performance ratio score," a value of 1.0 means that half of locations performed better than the given location, while the other half performed worse. A value *greater* than 1.0 signals that the location had better performance than the median. A value *less* than 1.0 indicates that a location had lower performance than the median.

How were the composite measures calculated?
To calculate a setting-specific quality score composite for each location, we took the average of the performance ratio scores within that care setting. For example, the average of six performance ratio scores was calculated to produce the outpatient physician quality score.

To calculate the overall quality score of a location, we calculated the average of that location's four care-setting-specific quality scores (that is, the average of its quality scores for hospital, outpatient physician, nursing home, and home health care).

What is the meaning of the green, yellow, or red color shading of each location?
Each location's "dot" in the scatter plot receives a color shade based on how far it diverges from a "median quality and spending line" (a 45-degree diagonal line drawn through the intersection of the dashed lines on the graph reflecting the points where the quality divided by spending ratio is equal to 1). Locations with a quality-to-spending ratio near this diagonal line receive a yellow shade. The higher-quality, lower-spending locations above and to the left of the diagonal line (quality to spending ratio >1) are shaded green. The lower-quality, higher-spending locations below and to the right of the diagonal line (quality to spending ratio <1) are shaded red. Within each measure, the state or region with the highest quality/cost quotient is shaded the darkest green and the location with the lowest quality/cost quotient is shaded the darkest red.