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Seven Years of Failure isn't Enough

A new study casts doubt on public reporting programs for hospitals. Medicare’s seven-year initiative, called Hospital Compare, has had no impact on reducing death rates. The purpose was to improve quality of health care through publishing scorecards on hospitals. But researchers say there has been virtually no impact.

One supporter says more studies are needed. Only in government is seven years of failure considered insufficient evidence of failure. Government officials like the control and the job security they get from endless data analysis. So far, the reporting effort has achieved nothing. But since it uses taxpayer dollars, the purveyors of paperwork over patient care appear to have no intention of shutting it down.

“Medicare’s Public Reporting Program on Hospital Quality Had Little or No Impact on Death Rates in Hospitals,” press release, Health Affairs, March 6, 2012.