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Puget Sound Health Alliance Lauds Hospitals for Using the SCOAP Checklist for Safer Surgery and for Publicly Sharing Surgery Data

Other Hospitals in Washington State Urged to Do the Same

SEATTLE, January 16, 2009— Learning a lesson from the airline industry, sixteen hospitals in Washington state now use the standard [SCOAP Surgical Checklist](#), unveiled this week, to improve patient safety during surgery. This comes on the heels of a stark reminder of the importance of standard checklists in professional settings with life or death consequences, as the US Airways pilot flawlessly followed the standard steps to keep his passengers safe during a forced landing in the Hudson River. Standard checklists save lives in airplanes and in operating rooms too.

A recent study in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) concluded that when surgeons and operating room teams use a checklist – like airplane pilots do – patients are 50% less likely to die and 33% less likely to have complications from that surgery. The [SCOAP Surgical Checklist](#) unveiled this week is now the standard checklist that all hospitals in this state should use to ensure that every patient benefits from surgical teams double-checking important details, which will significantly increase patient safety, reduce medical errors, and streamline surgical procedures.

“The availability of a standard surgical checklist is significant for all patients who want come through surgery as safely as possible,” said Mary McWilliams, executive director of the [Puget Sound Health Alliance](#). “As a partner in the SCOAP Surgical Checklist program, we want to spur all hospitals to use it for every surgery so we intend to note which hospitals are using the SCOAP Surgical Checklist as part of the hospital comparisons in our public [Community Checkup report](#).”

Every hospital uses a checklist; however, until they each use the standard checklist, there is no way to ensure that each list includes the right items nor that all surgical teams use it every time. “Washington hospitals embrace the standard surgical checklist to reduce surgical complications with sixteen hospitals already taking the lead,” said Leo Greenawalt, president of the [Washington State Hospital Association](#) (WSHA). “The WSHA Board has endorsed the standard surgical checklist and is encouraging hospitals across the state to the implement its use.”

In another milestone this week, the [Surgical Care Outcomes Assessment Program](#) (SCOAP) began to publicly report how often recommended care is provided during certain surgeries in some of the hospitals that participate in SCOAP. Hospitals that agree to publicly share their [SCOAP results](#) are on the leading edge of providing safer, more effective health care for their patients.

“We applaud the eight hospitals willing to share their SCOAP results with the community,” said David Fleming, M.D., Alliance Board Chair and Director of [Public Health – Seattle and King County](#). “Such transparency enables everyone to learn from those who consistently provide high quality care. We encourage other hospitals to follow their lead to ensure improved safety and health for patients who receive these types of surgery in this state.”

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Data on how often medical ‘best practices’ are used during appendectomies, bariatric surgery and colon or rectal surgery is collected from hospitals on a voluntary basis by the [Surgical Care Outcomes Assessment Project](#) (SCOAP), a program of the [Foundation for Health Care Quality](#). While 42 hospitals give data to SCOAP, none of that hospital-level data has been public until now.

SCOAP SURGICAL CHECKLIST: As of January 16, 2009, sixteen hospitals have adopted the standard [SCOAP Surgical Checklist](#) to use with all surgeries performed in their hospital:

1. Central Washington Hospital
2. Everett Clinic Kemp & Trask Surgery Centers
3. Evergreen Healthcare
4. Harborview Medical Center
5. Ocean Beach Hospital
6. PeaceHealth St. John Medical Center
7. Providence Everett Medical Center
8. Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children’s Hospital
9. Samaritan Healthcare
10. Seattle Children’s
11. Skagit Valley Hospital
12. Sunnyside Community Hospital
13. Swedish Health Services
14. University of Washington Medical Center
15. Virginia Mason Medical Center
16. Whidbey General Hospital

If patients don’t see their hospital in the list above, they can review [What You Can Do To Make Your Surgery Safer](#), which explains why the checklist is important and suggests ways that patients can encourage doctors and hospitals to use the standard [SCOAP Surgical Checklist](#).

PUBLIC COMPARISON OF SAFE SURGERY PRACTICES: The eight hospitals whose SCOAP data for three types of surgery is now available to the public are:

1. Central Washington Hospital
2. Kadlec Medical Center
3. PeaceHealth St. John Medical Center
4. Samaritan Healthcare
5. Sunnyside Community Hospital
6. Swedish Health Services
7. University of Washington Medical Center
8. Wenatchee Valley Medical Center

If patients don’t see their hospital in the list above, they can ask if their hospital chooses to be part of SCOAP. If it does, the patient can encourage their hospital to share their SCOAP data publicly.

All hospitals also provide performance data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. To compare hospitals based on that data, see the Alliance’s [Community Checkup report](#).

The [Puget Sound Health Alliance](#) is a non-profit made up of those who provide, pay for and use health care, working together to improve quality of care at a price more people can afford. Many individuals and about 170 organizations participate in the Alliance, including Boeing, Starbucks, Puget Sound Energy, REI, WAMU, the WA State Health Care Authority, King County and other employers, physician clinics, hospitals, consumer groups, unions and trusts, health plans, pharmaceutical companies, and other organizations. See www.pugetsoundhealthalliance.org To compare effective care in medical groups and hospitals in the Puget Sound region, go to www.WACommunityCheckup.org

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