

# Dartmouth Atlas Reporting at the Local Level



## Florida Health Care Coalition

[www.flhcc.com](http://www.flhcc.com)

### Coalition-Managed Reporting

The Florida Health Care Coalition's purpose is to address the quality of health care in the Florida community. The coalition has followed and used the work and information from Dartmouth for many years. Dr. Wennberg has given presentations to FHCC conferences aimed at showing the extreme patterns of care found in south Florida.

### HSA Level Data

In 2005 the coalition produced a report from the 2001 data examining in detail the patterns of care in fifteen south Florida HSAs from Stuart, FL south to Miami. For the total annual Medicare reimbursement per beneficiary, twelve of these fifteen HSAs are in the top quintile of all HSAs in the nation. The coalition wanted to understand the factors producing this consistently high cost. The ninety-four page report, **“Opportunities for Improvement – an Analysis of Health Care Costs and Quality for Southern Florida,”** included Profile reports from the Atlas website for sixteen diagnosis and treatment categories, the costs of twelve service categories, and the utilization of hospitals for nine high variation or overused treatment groups. These Profile reports show a unique footprint in each community on these indicators compared by percentiles with the rest of the nation in the Atlas database.

In a second section of the report, the Atlas website Distribution Graph was used to show how seventeen Florida HSAs were arrayed compared to the nation for twenty-six common surgical and medical procedures. Again a clear picture of variation appears showing the communities as among the highest frequency for some treatments, near the average for some and among the lowest for others. No consistent pattern of care can be seen for procedures and communities across the region. The coalition held a conference where the data and reports were presented to inform new and prospective members in south Florida about this information. Some health plan executives attending stated that they would take a fresh approach to contracting with hospitals based on the data. [Click here for electronic copy of the report.](#)

## Hospital Level Data

In 2007, the coalition prepared a second Atlas data report, “**Florida Health Care Coalition – 2006 Dartmouth Atlas Data for Selected Florida Hospitals,**” using the 2006 Atlas hospital-specific data from 2000-2003. The Distribution Graph for Florida was used to show how sixteen selected hospitals in Florida compared to the Florida benchmark for the sum of inpatient reimbursements and Part B payments per decedent during the last six months of life. Hospitals in Miami were almost 70 percent higher and in Tallahassee 35 percent lower than the state average for this statistic. Using fifteen specific indicators of cost and use such as Outlier Payments per Decedent, Part A reimbursements per day, ICU days per decedent and more; thirteen of the hospitals were examined to see what factors contributed to their position on the total cost indicator. The reaction of the coalition was to think about having individual meetings with selected hospital executives and board members to present and discuss the hospital specific data. [Click here for electronic copy of the report.](#)

In 2009 the coalition undertook an analysis of the 2000-2005 hospital-specific data from the 2008 Atlas website to prepare for meetings with selected hospital leaders in south Florida. An employee of the coalition prepared reports similar to the 2006 Atlas reports for use in these meetings. Coalition members in south Florida chose nine hospitals used most often by their covered populations to receive the reports and review the data with coalition staff and members.

*“Because hospitals have read some criticism of the Atlas data, we received some push back. Our response is easy; until and unless you provide something more robust with more rigor than the 30+ years that have gone in to The Dartmouth Atlas, we are going to use it to assess you! Furthermore, we are asking our health plans to use it when they negotiate with you because we have to move from payment for volume to payment for outcomes. It is so powerful to say that the people in the study that showed such extreme variation all had the same outcome - they died!”* Becky Cherney, FHCC President and CEO

### Next Steps:

The coalition has created a 2010 Hospital Wish List. On it, they ask hospitals to improve their Dartmouth Atlas data unless they can bring forth a better, more widely recognized tool.

For more information on the use of Dartmouth Atlas information in Florida, contact Becky Cherney, President and CEO, Florida Health Care Coalition, [becky@flhcc.com](mailto:becky@flhcc.com), 407-425-9500, 4401 Vineland Road. Orlando, FL 32811