



# Western Physicians' Alliance



## NEWSLETTER

January 2012

### Spotlight on Tertiary Referrals: University of Utah Health Care

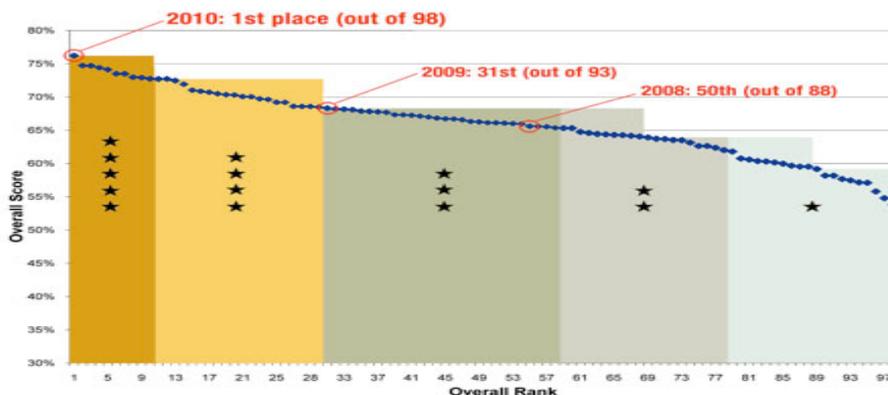
In 2007 the University of Utah Health Care system launched a new initiative with a clear directive: make the patient experience exceptional. Retreats were held with hospital and physician leadership to see what this would entail. Quality became the mission of their leadership, doctors, nurses and staff.

Three years ago, they set their sights on achieving a five star ranking by the University Health system Consortium's annual Quality and Accountability study. This study compares the nation's top academic medical centers and ranks them according to quality measures, patient safety indicators, mortality rates, readmission rates and satisfaction scores.

After three years of focused work, it was announced that the University of Utah Health Care system not only reached their five-star goal but they exceeded it to become #1 in Quality in the Nation. To rank first among such an elite group of academic medical centers, such as the Mayo Clinic, Stanford, Johns-Hopkins and Cedars-Sinai speaks of the dedication and talents and commitment of all involved in the Health Care system.

The Consortium's study (see chart below), one of the most rigorous available, examines 10 questions from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems (HCAHPS) patient survey, developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and anonymously mailed to patient's homes. Out of these answers, the University learned that quality includes medical knowledge, technical excellence, compliance with evidence-based processes and the totality of the patient's experience.

**National Ranking in University Healthsystem Consortium  
Quality & Accountability Study**



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## **SMHP Member Travel Allowance**

In addition to the medical care provided under the HealthFirst contract, there is a benefit to help offset member travel costs to Utah. Saint Mary's Health Plans offers a \$3,000 member travel allowance (related to a single episode of care) when care is rendered at University of Utah or Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. All trips and means of transportation must be approved by a SMHP case manager prior to commencing the trip.

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