Collaborative Saves Medicare Thousands and Demonstrates Quality Care

Medicare data shows Wilmington Health comparison to other clinics nationally

Data released shows a three-year trend of substantial savings to the Medicare system and improved healthcare outcomes for patients seen by Wilmington Health providers versus other healthcare providers across the country. The data was analyzed from the past three years’ worth of Medicare participants’ claims. In 2012, Wilmington Health showed an average total yearly expenditure by a Medicare patient at $7,019, down 11.7% from the organization’s 2010 numbers and $2,844 less than all other recent Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) participants, a 28.8% savings. Currently, Wilmington Health providers participate in the MSSP through Physicians Healthcare Collaborative (PHC), an Accountable Care Organization based in Wilmington, NC.

“Four years ago we began a journey at Wilmington Health to reduce the cost of care and demonstrate quality through evidence-based medicine,” said Jeff James, Wilmington Health Chief Executive Officer. “The data provided to us by Medicare proves that our efforts have had a significant impact in meeting our

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goals. Data-driven decision making has established our organization as a beacon of hope in the fight to retain a high-quality healthcare system without compromising the service our patients expect. Our patients’ health and well-being will always come first. But, we must continue to be the innovative force that revises a healthcare system unnecessarily driving our insurance premiums and out-of-pocket cost upward."

In addition to tracking financial improvements, Medicare also provides data on a variety of healthcare quality measures. Examples of quality measures from the Medicare data that confirm the superior performance by Wilmington Health to its peer group include: a 37.6% lower Patient Hospitalization Rate (per 1,000 person years), a 38.6% lower Emergency Department Visit Rate (per 1,000 person years), and 20.5% lower 30-day Hospital Readmission Rate (per 1,000 discharges).

“This data proves that with a collaborative effort, we can make a difference in the lives of our current and future seniors as it relates to their health and their pocketbook,” said Kelly Schaudt, Chief Operating Officer for Physicians Healthcare Collaborative. “Those on a fixed income cannot keep pace with the escalating costs of healthcare. With greater access to outcomes data and medical cost information via partnerships with insurance providers, we can really confront these key healthcare issues, while remaining committed to not sacrificing a satisfactory patient experience. We welcome other healthcare providers to join PHC and truly create a healthcare environment in the Wilmington area that can be a model for our entire nation.”

On January 1, 2013, PHC and 105 other organizations were accepted into the federal government’s MSSP. Among the 106 recent participants are: Ochsner Clinic of Louisiana and Mississippi; Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Teaching Hospital in Massachusetts; and Cedars-Sinai of California. The objective of this government program is to provide a higher quality healthcare product while reducing cost throughout the entire delivery system. To show improvements and track the savings garnered by each provider, the 106 organizations are given data directly from the Medicare system for review and comparison.

PHC’s primary role as an Accountable Care Organization is to coordinate the efforts of multiple healthcare providers toward achieving a higher standard of care while improving the current cost structure for the patients being served. PHC is actively working to expand its effective reach by forming partnerships with many other local healthcare groups and welcomes more to join their team. PHC is also required, as an MSSP participant, to report to the public the impact of the activities undertaken to make improvements to the healthcare system.

“Our patients’ health and well-being will always come first. But, we must continue to be the innovative force that revises a healthcare system unnecessarily driving our insurance premiums and out-of-pocket cost upward.”

Jeff James
Wilmington Health Chief Executive Officer
What makes a marriage last so long? According to Pete and Helen Courtney, who will be celebrating their 57th wedding anniversary this September, a strong marriage is a combination of many things including love and health.

And although their love remains strong, Pete developed an emergent medical condition. Recurring kidney infections led him to multiple doctors’ visits. In addition to being diagnosed with kidney stones, a CT scan also showed a more ominous diagnosis. Pete had a quickly growing abdominal aortic aneurysm.

An abdominal aortic aneurysm occurs when there is congenital or acquired weakness or thinning of the vessel wall, which then causes an abnormal dilation of the vessel. Untreated and undetected aneurysms carry a high risk of rupturing. Aneurysm rupture is fatal in 85-90% of cases.

Pete was then referred to Philip Brown Jr., MD, FACS, a Wilmington Health vascular surgeon. After evaluating Pete’s situation, Dr. Brown believed the best treatment plan was the recently FDA-approved Endurant Aorto-Uni-Iliac Stent Graft System (Endurant AUI). This device uses a fabric-covered stent to seal off the aneurysm and restore normal flow through the aorta, thus preventing life-threatening rupture. In Pete’s case, use of this device was essential due to previous vascular reconstruction resulting in anatomy that would have been very difficult if not impossible to manage with a minimally invasive technique before the availability of the Endurant AUI.

Dr. Brown was the first physician in the nation to place an Endurant AUI device. “The Endurant AUI stent graft was the best approach for this particular situation. Previous treatment options would not have allowed an approved, minimally invasive operation, which would have meant a high-risk open operation resulting in a prolonged recovery,” said Dr. Brown. “Instead, we were able to give Pete a minimally invasive operation with an overnight hospital stay and a rapid return to normal physical status.”

So how does it feel to be the first surgeon in the country to perform an operation with the Endurant AUI device? “It wouldn’t matter if I were the first or the fifth,” Dr. Brown said. “I’m just happy we have safer alternatives for abdominal aortic aneurysm repair for patients like Pete.”

Although patient outcomes vary, the normal recovery time for open surgery treatment of aortic aneurysm repair is four to six weeks. The recovery time for the newly approved surgery is typically less than two weeks. Thanks to Dr. Brown, Pete is on his way to a full recovery and is expected to return to his normal activities well before it’s time to celebrate 57 years with Helen.

If you have abdominal aortic aneurysm, find out how you can be referred to Dr. Brown and the Wilmington Health Surgery team by calling 910.763.6289, or visit www.wilmingtonhealth.com for more information.
Pediatric Infectious Disease’s Gina Berthold, MD, and Peter Maggiore, MD, have specialized training in pediatric infectious diseases. They diagnose and treat the full range of infectious diseases in kids of all ages.

- Chronic and recurrent infections/unexplained fever
- Diagnostic puzzles (mystery illness)
- Bacterial, fungal, and viral infections

Dr. Berthold attended medical school at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and performed her residency and fellowship at Baystate Medical Center/Tufts University. She is board certified in Internal Medicine and board eligible in Pediatrics.

Dr. Maggiore attended medical school at Albany Medical College in New York, where he also completed his internship, residency, and fellowship. He is board certified in Internal Medicine and Infectious Disease.

Find out how your child can be referred to Wilmington Health Pediatric Infectious Disease by calling 910.341.3426; we’ll get our detectives on the case!

If your child has a recurrent or mysterious illness, we can help!

Wilmington Health Podiatry Expands to Jacksonville

Dustin Prins, DPM, now accepting patients

Wilmington Health podiatrist, Dr. Dustin Prins, is now seeing patients at Wilmington Health in Jacksonville, 1899 North Marine Boulevard, Jacksonville. Dr. Prins provides comprehensive foot and ankle care to adults and children with a wide range of ailments including, but not limited to, arthritis, fractured bones, sports injuries, and strains. He can also assist patients with custom orthotics.

Dr. Prins graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from Dordt College in Sioux Center, IA. He received a Master of Arts in Sports Medicine and Athletic Training at the University of Nebraska and a Doctor of Podiatric Medicine at Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine in Cleveland. He is board qualified in Rear Foot, Foot, and Ankle Surgery.

“I am pleased to offer my services to the Jacksonville community,” said Dr. Prins. “As a decorated officer in the U.S. Navy, I am excited to practice where I can continue to care for those who support or who are part of the armed forces.”

Are you having issues with your feet or ankles? Call Dr. Prins at 910.989.4840, or visit http://www.wilmingtonhealth.com/locations/jacksonville.
Weight Management Success Stories

Two patients work hard to enjoy weight loss

Ben
After a severe, traumatic motor vehicle accident in January 2012, Ben was told he could not be flown to the Trauma Center due to his weight. That’s when he knew something had to change. After trying several different diet programs and not having very much success, Ben came to Wilmington Health Weight Management, an HMR Program.

“The program is simple; the food is great; and as long as you follow the program you will have success,” he said. Ben lost over 140 pounds in the Phase 1 classes and has continued to lose weight in the maintenance phase for a total weight loss of over 150 pounds! His BMI went from 50 to 27, and he has come off all of his blood pressure medications.

Abbey
Forty pounds lost and confidence gained! Abbey is a Wilmington Health employee and Wilmington Health Weight Management, an HMR Program, participant. With the help of the HMR Program’s Decision-Free in-clinic option, she lost 40 pounds in just 12 weeks!

“I thought a group class would be the last thing I would be interested in, but it’s been really helpful. I know that without the support and accountability of the coach and classmates, I would have done the bare minimum and given up before now,” said Abbey.

To find out more about Wilmington Health Weight Management, an HMR Program, please call 910.362.4535.
Wilmington Health Gastroenterology voluntarily joined a national data registry to track and document the quality of their endoscopy services. The new quality initiative, the Gastrointestinal Quality Improvement Consortium, Ltd., or GIQuIC, measures and grades endoscopic performance and compares the results on a location, regional, and national scale.

“Participation in this national program of quality in GI endoscopy shows our commitment to providing superior care to our patients,” said Wilmington Health Gastroenterology’s Matthew Mlot, MD, FACG. “This program lets us compare our results against other groups across the country, allowing us to demonstrate our high level of quality, but also showing us any weaknesses that we can improve upon to make sure we maintain high standards.”

GIQuIC is a non-profit partnership established by two national medical groups, the American College of Gastroenterology and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. The program documents the quality of care provided during procedures, such as a colonoscopy, by tracking how well the physician does in terms of seeing the entire colon; finding growths or polyps; and in the rare instance, reporting any complications.

Wilmington Health Gastroenterology diagnoses and treats all problems in the digestive system including colon cancer, inflammatory bowel conditions, and conditions of the pancreas and gallbladder. Colon cancer screening and small bowel pill cam endoscopy are also available.

Robert Nesse, MD, to Speak

One of the nation’s most influential people in healthcare, Robert Nesse, MD, CEO of Mayo Clinic Health System, presented “Where Are We Headed in Healthcare? System Integration for High Value Performance” to Wilmington-area healthcare providers on August 22.

Can You Hear Me?

Wilmington Health audiologists David Gagliardi, AuD, and Aimee B. Parker, AuD, are available to evaluate, diagnose, treat, and manage hearing loss, tinnitus, and balance disorders in patients of all ages. Audiology is offered at three convenient locations:

- **Silver Stream Lane**
  2421 Silver Stream Ln., Wilmington
  910.341.3440

- **Porters Neck**
  8090 Market St., Wilmington
  910.509.7474

- **Jacksonville**
  1899 N. Marine Blvd., Jacksonville
  910.509.7474

If you or your child is experiencing hearing problems, call Audiology today!

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Left to right: Dr. Matthew Mlot, Dr. Allan Hiroshi Andrews, Karla Von, PA-C

Do you have digestive issues? Find out how you can be referred to Wilmington Health Gastroenterology by calling 910.341.3343, or visit www.wilmingtonhealth.com/gastroenterology for more information.
On the Move

Dr. Kira Alatar Moves Practice to Porters Neck

Kira Alatar, MD, has relocated to Wilmington Health at Porters Neck, 8108-B Market Street, Wilmington. A physician in Family Medicine, Dr. Alatar provides comprehensive healthcare for patients of all ages. If you would like to schedule an appointment with Dr. Alatar, please call the Porters Neck office at 910.686.2099.

J’nelle Ruscetti, PA-C, Moves to Monkey Junction

J’nelle Ruscetti, PA-C, has relocated to Wilmington Health Family Medicine at Monkey Junction (5245 South College Road, Wilmington). If you would like to make an appointment with J’nelle, please contact our Monkey Junction office at 910.772.6290.

Dr. Joshua Watson Joins Brunswick Forest Team

Joshua Watson, DO, welcomes Internal Medicine patients to Wilmington Health at Brunswick Forest, 1333 South Dickinson Drive, Leland. As an internist, he will provide comprehensive care to adults 18 years or older.

From regular health examinations to acute illnesses and chronic conditions, Dr. Watson will monitor and manage his patients’ health. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Howard Payne University in Brownwood, TX. He then received a Doctor of Osteopathy with honors from the University of North Texas Health Science Center at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Watson completed his internal medicine residency at NHRMC.

Make Dr. Watson your primary care provider by calling Wilmington Health Internal Medicine at Brunswick Forest at 910.371.0404.

Rheumatology Adds Dr. Heather Favorito to Team

Wilmington Health Rheumatology welcomes Heather Favorito, MD, to the team. She is now seeing patients for non-surgical treatment of musculoskeletal conditions. She will practice at 1202 Medical Center Drive in Wilmington.

Dr. Favorito graduated from Binghamton University in New York with a Bachelor of Arts and received her Doctor of Medicine from Saint George’s University in Grenada, West Indies. She completed her internal medicine residency and rheumatology fellowship at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola, NY. Dr. Favorito is board certified in Internal Medicine.

As a rheumatologist, Dr. Favorito will treat patients with arthritis, connective tissue disease, osteoarthritis, and more. Call 910.815.7421 to find out how Wilmington Health Rheumatology can help you.

Dr. Michael Favorito Joins Endocrinology

Michael Favorito, MD, has joined the Wilmington Health Endocrinology team. He is now seeing patients at Wilmington Health on Physicians Drive, 1500 Physicians Drive, Wilmington.

Dr. Favorito graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education at the University of New York at City College. He received a Doctor in Medicine at the State University of New York at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. Dr. Favorito has previous experience as a licensed physician in diabetes and endocrinology. He is board certified in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology.

Do you think you need to see an endocrinologist? Call Wilmington Health Endocrinology at 910.763.6332 for more information about how you can be referred to an endocrinologist.
Dr. Peter Ungaro Teams Up with Dr. Justin Markow in Oncology/Hematology

Board certified in Internal Medicine, Oncology, and Hematology, Peter Ungaro, MD, has joined the Wilmington Health Oncology team. As an oncoslogist, Dr. Ungaro will diagnose and treat a wide variety of cancers alongside oncologist Justin Markow, DO.

Dr. Ungaro graduated from the University of Miami School of Medicine. He completed his internship and was a medical resident at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. For almost 30 years, he was a Professor of Medicine in the Divisions of Hematology and Oncology at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. In addition to being a professor, he has several years of experience as a medical oncologist.

If you or someone you know has cancer or a disease of the blood, find out how to be referred to Wilmington Health Oncology by calling 910.815.7402.

John McElhinney, PA-C, Joins Dr. Philip Brown Jr. in Surgery and Vascular Surgery

John McElhinney, PA-C, teams up with the Wilmington Health Surgery and Vascular Surgery team to evaluate general and vascular surgery patients; assist Philip Brown, MD, FACS, in the operating room; and provide pre- and post-surgical care. Wilmington Health Surgery is located at 1202 Medical Center Drive, Wilmington.

Wilmington Health Urology welcomes Kristy O’Connell, PA-C. Kristy treats diseases and malfunctions of the bladder, prostate, and kidney in adults. In addition, she is trained to manage problems concerning male sexual dysfunction and infertility.

Kristy graduated from the Physician Assistant Program at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. She is a member of the North Carolina Academy of Physician Assistants and the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

For appointments and referrals to Wilmington Health Urology, call 910.341.3389.

Kristy O’Connell, PA-C, Joins Urology Team

Karen Chance, ANP, Partners with Dr. J.L. Aldrich in Cardiology

Karen Chance, ANP, joins J.L. Aldrich, MD, FACC, in our Wilmington Health Cardiology Southport office. As an adult nurse practitioner in Cardiology, Karen will conduct physicals for pre-operative patients, interpret pre-operative EKG and lab results, and help prepare patients for surgery.

Karen received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from UNC at Chapel Hill, NC, and her Master of Science in Nursing from Duke University School of Nursing in Durham, NC.

Karen will see patients at Wilmington Health in Southport at Dosher Medical Plaza, 4222 Long Beach Road, Southport. Call 910.457.9081 to schedule an appointment.

Holly Smith, NP-C, Joins Pulmonary and Allergy

Holly Smith, NP-C, is now accepting patients at Wilmington Health Pulmonary and Allergy. As an adult nurse practitioner, Holly will educate and counsel patients on managing their asthma, COPD, allergies, and other pulmonary conditions.

Holly received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from East Carolina University, Greenville, NC, and her Master of Science in Nursing from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She will be seeing patients at Wilmington Health on Medical Center Drive, 1202 Medical Center Drive, Wilmington. To schedule an appointment with Holly, please call 910.341.3458.
Urgent Care and Convenient Care

Wilmington Health offers Urgent Care and Convenient Care to treat non-emergency conditions in patients and non-patients of all ages. These services are perfect for weekends and after hours, because walk-ins are always welcome.

Urgent Care
Open 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily

Monkey Junction
5245 South College Road, Wilmington
910.392.7806

Jacksonville
1899 North Marine Boulevard, Jacksonville
910.347.1515

Convenient Care
Open 12-8 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday & Sunday

Porters Neck
8108-B Market Street, Wilmington
910.686.2870

Brunswick Forest
1333 South Dickinson Drive, Suite 140, Leland
910.371.7695

We’re Bringing Healthcare to Your Neighborhood
See what’s close to your home! For more information, call 910.341.3300, or visit www.wilmingtonhealth.com.
Brunswick Forest Block Party

Wilmington Health at Brunswick Forest recently participated in the Brunswick Forest Block Party.

Azalea Festival

Many Wilmington Health providers and employees enjoyed the Azalea Festival in April!
Smart Start Award Winners

Congratulations to all the nominees and winners of the Smart Start Award, especially our very own Pam Taylor, DO, FAAP, of Pediatrics. Nominees and winners alike were honored for their commitment to children in our area.

Dr. Taylor assisted in establishing a unique position to assist with the care and management of foster children seen at Wilmington Health Pediatrics. The foster care coordinator facilitates communication between the caregivers, medical and mental health providers, and the New Hanover County Department of Social Services, while encouraging positive preventive health!
“My husband has been a patient at a VA hospital for years. His cancer returned about two years ago. We hit a stand-still at the VA hospital and decided to go to private practice facilities. We found Wilmington Health. What an outstanding facility! We have yet to find one unhappy employee or someone who was not readily willing to help—with a smile. You and everyone at Wilmington Health deserve a big thank you. Keep up the great work and keep those smiles and positive attitudes coming! At Wilmington Health, a patient is not just a number. That patient is the most important person. Thank you ALL for being there for those who need a helping hand.”

Patient’s Wife, Dermatology (Dr. Appel)

“I would like to commend Dr. Markow on the treatment I have received from him. He and his staff have always made me feel like they cared about me and treated me like one of the family. I feel like because of the intensive treatment Dr. Markow has given me, my quality of life is much better now and I’m optimistic about the future.”

Grover, Oncology patient

“I have always found Dr. Bishop to be courteous and attentive to my needs. I feel that his clinical and diagnostic skills are a major factor in my cardiac stability. I would recommend him in a ‘heartbeat.’”

Rose, Cardiology patient