What is Quality in Health Care?

Everyone deserves quality health care. You can make sure you get the best health care when you are sick or hurt by understanding what quality health care is and steps to take to improve your health.

How to know if you are getting quality health care
- Your health care fits your needs and preferences.
- Your health care does not cause harm.
- Your health care is right for your illness.
- Your health care is given without unnecessary delays.
- Your health care includes only the medical tests and procedures that you need.
- Your health care is fair and not affected by such things as your gender, language, color, age or income.

What you can do
- Learn about what quality health care is.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse about your needs.
- Before you choose a doctor or hospital, learn about how well they provide the care you need. You can find this information on Internet sites.
- Make a list of all the medicines you take, your major illnesses and injuries. Share this list with your doctor.
- Make a list of questions you want to ask your doctor about your health problem or operation and what you need to do.
- Take a family member or friend along to your doctor visit to help you, if needed.
- Take your medicines the way your doctor tells you to. Follow her or his instructions.
- Take care of yourself.
    - Eat healthy foods.
    - Limit alcohol use.
    - Stop smoking.
    - Be active.

Quality Measurement
Fortunately, there are scientific ways to measure health care quality. Health professionals, who provide care to patients, use measures to review and improve the quality of care they provide. A quality measure is information from a patient's record or a health care process that is converted into a rate, percentage or time that shows how well providers are taking care of their patients. Quality measures give you information about how well providers care for some, but not all of their patients. Most quality measures have been designed to measure care that is proven to work. Patients who should not get the recommended care treatments are not counted in the measures.

Fully developed and tested measures are available for reporting on some, but not all, medical conditions. But there is some quality information you can use right now to help you compare your health care choices. Many public and private groups are working to improve and expand health care quality measures. The goal is to make these measures more reliable, uniform, and helpful to consumers in making health care choices.

Reporting Leads to Improvement
Wyoming hospitals are united around one concept: to improve patient care in the communities they serve. They also agree: you can't improve what you don't measure. That is why they have committed to measuring and publicly reporting their performance.