

## Florida Hospitals, Surgeons Launch Statewide Initiative to Improve Care

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The Florida Hospital Association and the American College of Surgeons today launched a joint [Florida Surgical Care Initiative](#)—a statewide program to improve patient safety and surgical care while reducing costly complications.

"Quality care is a core value for our hospitals and surgeons, but complications still occur," FHA President Bruce Rueben said in a media release. "By working together, we'll be able to significantly improve care, prevent complications, reduce costs and demonstrate to the nation that Florida is a leader in quality healthcare."

Regional variation in the quality and cost of care has been identified as a critical issue for the nation's healthcare system, and FHA hopes the initiative will allow its member hospitals to proactively tackle the issue.

Funded in part by a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, FSCI will focus on:

- Surgical site and urinary tract infections—two of the most common complications.
- Colorectal surgery outcomes—an area with higher rates of complications.
- Elderly surgery outcomes—because elderly patients are more likely to experience complications.

The initiative is based on ACS' [National Surgical Quality Improvement Program](#), which tracks and assesses risk-adjusted, clinical, 30-day outcomes data for surgical care.

[Proponents say ACS NSQIP](#) reduces complications and deaths at participating hospitals and saves money by preventing complications, which can add \$11,000 or more to the cost of care for each patient.

Clifford Ko, MD, director of ACS NSQIP, said FSCI is unlike other quality improvement programs because it is based on hard clinical data and patient follow-ups for 30 days after they leave the hospital.

"Before you can improve quality, you must first be able to accurately measure it," Ko said. "You wouldn't want your doctor to determine the next steps in your care by looking at your billing information. Nor should we be relying on that information alone to judge the quality of the care provided."

The FSCI measures—developed by ACS and CMS—are under review by the National Quality Forum and could become national quality measures by CMS. Florida hospitals are the first in the nation to participate in this outcomes-based program.

"If we achieved the quality improvements that we know are possible, we could free up resources that could, in turn, be used to expand access to healthcare in our country," said David Hoyt, MD, executive director of ACS. "Florida hospitals will lead the nation in showing that proven programs like the ACS NSQIP can significantly improve patient care while reducing costs, and provide an example for other states to follow."

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