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Rural Hospitals Provide Better Value

KANSAS CITY, MO, April 30, 2012 – According to data released by the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), rural hospitals nationally have equal or better quality outcomes, and cost less per Medicare beneficiary than their urban counterparts. The intersection between cost and quality defines the value proposition that rural systems of care provide to the Medicare program.

As part of deficit reduction efforts at the federal level, some proposals have centered on reducing or eliminating “special payments” to rural providers. This groundbreaking information, using the latest CMS Shared Savings Program data, reveals that Medicare spending is 3.7% less per Medicare beneficiary in rural markets than in urban markets, even though this spending includes “special payments” provided to rural hospitals and practitioners. This new data on quality and costs, combined with known higher patient satisfaction scores, make small rural hospitals high value providers for rural communities. The study reveals that care can be provided in rural areas with similar outcomes to urban settings even with the challenges of the rural health care environment with targeted payment alternatives that recognize the realities of the rural health care delivery system.

“This data clearly shows that rural hospitals and clinics are a good value to both patients and to Government payers,” said Alan Morgan, NRHA Chief Executive Officer. “There is a lot to learn from this data. Specifically, how we can redesign our existing healthcare system to be less expensive, have better quality, and receive better satisfaction scores from the patients themselves.”

The groundbreaking report entitled “Rural Relevance Under Healthcare Reform: A Performance-Based Assessment of Rural Healthcare in America” presents summary findings from research and analysis conducted by iVantage Health Analytics, Inc.. The report sheds new, multi-dimensional light on the rural healthcare delivery systems using the latest Medicare Shared Savings data files, the Hospital Strength Index™, the first nationwide hospital rating system to evaluate rural hospitals, and the industry’s largest proprietary rural Emergency Department database. The report can be found at [Rural Relevance Under Healthcare Reform](#).

About The National Rural Health Association

NRHA is a nonprofit organization working to improve the health and well-being of rural Americans and providing leadership on rural health issues through advocacy, communications, education and research. NRHA membership is made up of 21,000 diverse individuals and organizations, all of whom share the common bond of an interest in rural health. For more information visit www.RuralHealthWeb.org.

About iVantage Health Analytics

iVantage Health Analytics, Inc.™ is a privately held healthcare business intelligence and technology company.. The company is a leading provider of information products serving an expansive healthcare industry. iVantage Health Analytics™ integrates diverse information with innovative delivery platforms to ensure customers’ timely, concise, and relevant strategic action. For more information, visit www.iVantageHealth.com.