



PROMOTING YOUR MONAHRQ-GENERATED WEBSITE: A Resource Guide for Organizations Using MONAHRQ

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The purpose of this document is to help any organization promote its own MONAHRQ-generated website or reports. This guide was developed with funding from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

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Introduction: Why Promote Your MONAHRQ-Generated Website?

MONAHRQ helps you easily generate public or private websites and reports on health care quality and cost, whether for use by the general public or within your organization. The success of your MONAHRQ-generated website in meeting your goals depends on whether or not the website and reports are seen and used by important target audiences. This Guide is designed to help you – and your communication team and other colleagues – consider the issues and options, develop plans, and engage partners to help implement activities to raise awareness and encourage use of your MONAHRQ website and reports.

The strategies described in this guide can be used to increase awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website and reports whether they are available to anyone in the general public, to those within your organization only, or to a select group of people who need a password to access the information. Review the strategic considerations and general guidance in each chapter, then use the templates in the attachments to develop outreach materials and a practical approach to promoting your MONAHRQ website. If applicable, work closely with your organization’s communication team throughout in this process.

The steps suggested in this Guide can be started before you create a website using MONAHRQ. It is helpful to consider the purpose and intended audiences of your MONAHRQ website, then develop and implement a promotion plan that is integrated with your overall approach to generating the website. Promotional activities should precede and follow the publishing or ‘release’ of your website, and continue throughout the use of your MONAHRQ website over time. As you evaluate the success of the promotional efforts and the changing needs and interests of your target audiences, you can adjust the promotion plan and related activities to keep your MONAHRQ website and reports top of mind as a useful resource for others.

Using MONAHRQ to generate a website and related reports is a cost-effective way to create transparency that is vitally important to improving health care quality, cost or other outcomes. But simply making the information available is not sufficient: your target audiences need to know that the website and reports are available, how to access them, and the value they are likely to get from using them. With this guide in hand, and just a bit of effort to consider your unique circumstances and customize the templates, you will be well on your way to having the ideas and tools necessary to increase awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website and reports by the people who need the information to inform their health care decisions.

Developing a Promotion Plan

Purpose: To increase the chances that people are aware of your MONAHRQ website and choose to use it for decision-making, it is best to communicate key messages more than once and through multiple avenues. The purpose of a Promotion Plan is to help you clarify your goals, strategies and activities so that you can effectively promote your MONAHRQ website. The worksheet to define your key audiences and the Promotion Plan template are found in [Template A](#) and [Template B](#).

Considerations:

1. Effective communication is important but not simple. There is little chance that your MONAHRQ website will help drive performance improvement or consumer choices if no one knows about it. That's why promoting your site is an important part of the reporting process. As you proceed, consider a few key factors for success:

- **Defining the intended audience(s) for your MONAHRQ website makes a big difference for your planning and activities.** Different audiences are receptive to different messages, and get their information from different sources. Identify who your target audiences are, and focus your efforts on promoting the MONAHRQ website to them, while keeping in mind that public websites and reports will be seen by others, too.
 - If your website and reports are private, shared only within your organization or with individuals who have the right password, then your audiences likely include your organization's management, work teammates, or people in other departments or agencies who can use the information from the reports to inform their work.
 - If your MONAHRQ website and reports are publicly available, then the audiences include consumers and others in the general public, plus all of the groups listed above for the private reports. Public reports will also be seen by hospitals, doctors and other providers, members of the media, and community opinion leaders. Some publicly available health care measurement websites are not designed for use by patients and other consumers; in fact, making such information public can create a strong "reputational" incentive while supporting peer learning among providers.
 - To help you think through the intended audiences for your MONAHRQ website and reports, in addition to considering how others might see and interpret the information in the reports, see [Template A](#).
- **Organizations often have ambitious goals, yet limited financial and staff resources.** A clear promotion plan will help ensure that each activity supports your goals, clarify who will engage in each activity, and prioritize activities to ensure best use of limited resources. It can also extend your reach by identifying others inside and outside of your organization who can assist with your promotional efforts.
- **What, when and how to promote a MONAHRQ website should reflect your unique circumstances.** Promotion plans ought to reflect your market and organizational structure,

experience and history of reporting, content of your MONAHRQ website, local opinion leaders' attitudes about performance measurement and reporting, and other local factors. There are many potential approaches to promoting your MONAHRQ website, and an effective promotion plan must be customized to fit your organization's situation and needs.

- **Reporters and others in the media tend to look for controversy or conflict as a way to grab their audiences' attention.** In contrast, your organization's efforts to encourage health care quality improvement may be more successful with positive, inclusive messages (e.g., "Everyone has room to improve" or "Each of us has a role in helping to improve health care quality"). Reporters may be looking for divisive angles such as: "See who is below average" or "Use this report to avoid bad hospitals" or "Dr. Jones thinks this MONAHRQ website will mislead patients." Effective promotion involves the development and use of truthful and engaging key messages about the MONAHRQ website, cultivating trusted leaders to be credible spokespeople, and working with the media to highlight interesting news angles that do not conflict with the goals of your organization.

With careful planning, these issues can be manageable. To reduce the risk associated with the challenges above, engage in planning, customize your approach, and collaborate with others on the message and promotion activities.

2. Opportunities to promote your MONAHRQ website are everywhere. As you consider ways to raise awareness of your MONAHRQ website, think about how to use planned observances and activities that relate to the content of your MONAHRQ website, and identifying organizations and individuals who might also have an interest in helping to spread the word about your MONAHRQ website.

- Community activities and events present opportunities throughout the year to share information about your MONAHRQ website. Every month there are national campaigns and related local activities to raise awareness about certain health topics. For example:
 - February is heart health month, so work with the local Heart Association to ensure that their announcements mention the aspects of your website that focus on heart disease or cardiac care as an important resource for patients.
 - Sports teams often promote health-related nonprofits and intervention and awareness activities around national health observances, such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. From professional leagues to community sports, teams may use various promotion techniques to spread the message, such as publishing information on their websites about the importance of cancer screenings, or working with local organizations to conduct on-site screenings before games. Consider the content of your MONAHRQ website and reports, then reach out to your local team to see where you might work together.
 - To spur thinking about how to make the most of such opportunities, see the list of national events and observances ([Template C](#)).

- Many organizations and individuals communicate about health in your region. Expand the notion of ‘media’ and ‘reporters’ to include people associated with newspapers, radio and TV, plus those who write for health-related websites, blogs and communication staff within medical associations, large employers, health plans and community groups. These can become partner organizations and a great resource for you. Many have websites, plus newsletters to employees and customers or members, and hold wellness fairs or other activities in which they could share information about your MONAHRQ website and reports. The resources in this promotion toolkit offer several ideas and templates to help you make the most of potential partners (see [Templates A](#) through [G](#)).

3. It’s never too soon — or too late — to start communicating. Whether or not you’ve already published your MONAHRQ website, it is helpful to build awareness about the need for measurement, accountability and shared information in health care. Communicating about topics like this, at any time, can:

- Expand awareness of the need for the work being done by your organization
- Build anticipation for or interest in your MONAHRQ website
- Increase discussion about health care quality, measurement and reporting, which can result in better mutual understanding and trust in the process (and trust in your MONAHRQ website)

If your MONAHRQ website has been up and running for a while, starting or boosting promotion activities can have a significant impact. In fact, you may be able to apply the experience of running your MONAHRQ website to hone your outreach activities and messages. Perhaps a few people who use your MONAHRQ website or reports could provide a quote or two about why or how they use the information. Share a profile or two of people who use your MONAHRQ website to help paint a picture of the types of people or organizations who may also find value in using it.

The Target Audience Worksheet, the Promotion Plan template and the List of National Health Observances – in [Template A](#), [Template B](#), and [Template C](#) respectively – can help you think through effective ways to promote your MONAHRQ website.

Developing and Using Key Messages

Purpose: There are many ways to approach discussions about your MONAHRQ website when it is released; however, developing key messages and building consensus about how to talk about the website before the release will yield important benefits. Using agreed-upon key messages will reduce the risk of conflicting messages, which is important considering that you have one chance to make a good first impression. Even if you already have published a MONAHRQ website, it's still a good idea to think through and solidify your messaging. A template format for sharing your key messages is in [Template D](#).

Considerations:

- **The Process of Developing Key Messages Forces Clarification of Important Issues.** Without a discussion, it is likely that different people will have different answers for basic questions such as “*why* are you producing this MONAHRQ website?” and “*how will* your MONAHRQ website be used?” These questions will be asked, so developing simple and true messages to guide the answers is important. Defining such messages is best done *before* your MONAHRQ website is published, whether privately to certain audiences or publicly for everyone. When developing key messages, consider long-term goals, yet be realistic about the MONAHRQ website content as it stands now.
- **Reduce White Noise.** With key messages in hand, you and your partners can be more consistent in the content of various documents and other communication efforts from each individual or organization. Without key messages, the likelihood of conflicting statements increases and the resulting ‘white noise’ can confuse your target audiences or cause them to not learn anything about your MONAHRQ website and reports.
- **Avoid Unnecessary Controversy.** Without shared key messages, potential partners in your website promotion will avoid saying anything or they will come up with their own messages and statements about your MONAHRQ website. The different and possibly conflicting perspectives about the purpose, value and intended use of your MONAHRQ website could be confusing and even used by reporters looking for controversy and conflict for their news stories. You are more likely to have an effective rollout of your MONAHRQ website if you develop and share key messages in advance.
- **Key Messages Make Communication Easier.** It’s a simple truth that if people have three or four points to focus on – whether in discussions, interviews, newsletter articles, presentations or other materials – they are more likely to get those main points across. Key messages will help a range of people become better and more effective communicators to help increase awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website.

With some advance work, you can create a path forward with key messages that make a wide range of communication more effective and easier. See [Template D](#) for a template for sharing your key messages.

Engaging Stakeholders to Help Promote Your MONAHRQ Website

Purpose: When preparing to release your MONAHRQ website, working with organizations and individuals involved in your organization can extend your communication reach to important audiences. This is essential when releasing your first MONAHRQ website, as you have one chance to make a good first impression. Template outreach text and a sample newsletter article for use in engaging other individuals and organizations to help increase awareness of your MONAHRQ website and reports are in [Template E](#).

Considerations:

- **Not All Sources of Information Are Equal.** Some target audiences may be more familiar with and trust certain individuals or groups as the “messengers” more than they might know or trust your organization. Hearing about your MONAHRQ website from a trusted source can be particularly important for those who may be wary about the potential impact of its release.
- **Connect the dots.** Consider the content of your website and reports, and identify any groups or individuals who might have concerns about such performance measurement and reporting, and how its purpose and content might be (mis-)interpreted. For example, if hospitals or physicians (or other clinicians) have expressed concern about performance measurement, accountability and transparency, identify and work with leaders of hospitals, clinics or associations in your area who support this kind of work. Invite these individuals directly into your communication planning and work with them as partners as you plan for the release and promotion of your MONAHRQ website and reports.
- **Reduce the element of surprise.** By working in advance with individuals and organizations who have a “finger on the pulse” of important audiences, you’ll reduce the likelihood of surprise. Being caught off guard or feeling left out of the process can be an underlying reason for a stakeholder to react negatively when they hear about your MONAHRQ website. As you include other people in your planning, you will likely learn about new questions or perspectives. This improves your ability to be ready to address such issues either before or after your MONAHRQ website is published.
- **An organization that is treated like a partner is more likely to act like a partner.** This is especially important when members of the media contact opinion leaders to get their views on your MONAHRQ website. By involving the most likely targets of reporters’ calls in the planning, your efforts at coordinated messaging and approaches will more likely result in accurate media coverage. Providing template materials that they can customize will ease their work burden while improving the chances of your key messages also being used by your partners. **Note:** *Any materials you provide to others, even if for internal use, could become public. Only include content that would be acceptable to see in a newspaper or other media.*

Coordinated communication activities with partner organizations and individuals might include:

- Including them in your communication-related planning.
- Sharing draft key messages about the MONAHRQ website rollout with representatives of certain stakeholder groups to get their reactions and ideas, then providing the final key messages for these partners to use as they communicate about the website. (See [Template D.](#))
- Providing template materials such as a short article they can include in their newsletter just before the MONAHRQ website is published. (See [Template E.](#))
- Gathering a list of supportive quotes from high profile individuals or organizations, with the name the person being quoted, the organization (or job title if this is a roll-out within your organization), and – in cases where media is involved – the person’s contact information for follow-up interviews. Include that list with the materials (and media release where applicable) about your MONAHRQ website. Depending on who is quoted, this list can show support by a diverse range of individuals and organizations.

With some planning and preparation of materials that can be used by others to help spread the word about your MONAHRQ website, you can make it easy for individuals and organizations to be effective partners in the process. Include them early in the process, then, before the MONAHRQ website is released, remind them of the actions they can take to help increase awareness and use of your website and reports.

See [Template E](#) for template outreach text and a sample newsletter article to customize for use with your communication partners before the rollout of your MONAHRQ website.

Using Media Releases to Promote Your MONAHRQ Website

Purpose: News releases are a standard element in traditional media relations. While historic notions about ‘the media’ are certainly changing (see the next section on using social media), there are several reasons to produce a conventional media release each time you unveil a new or updated MONAHRQ website. See [Template F](#) for a template media release.

Considerations:

Your News Release has Several Purposes. While ideally you may want print (newspaper, magazine, online) and broadcast (radio, TV) reporters to read the news release and use it for their coverage of your MONAHRQ website, this rarely happens. That being said, a well written news release increases the chances that reporters and health writers understand the main points you want to make about your MONAHRQ website. When you write a news release, send it via email with the title of the release in the subject line. Also, post it as a page on your organization’s website, with embedded hyperlinks to the MONAHRQ reports to increase traffic. Consider using your organization’s email newsletter distribution or other way to send the news release to a large number of people who may be interested. Distributing your news release far and wide will serve several purposes:

- **Increase awareness of your MONAHRQ website and reports among reporters and other health writers.** This is the primary purpose of any news release. Some reporters will do their own research to develop a story after they read your news release. Writers who work for smaller newspapers or publications may simply take the content of your news release and re-word it, or, if it is written in a way that fits with their publication style, reprint it nearly verbatim. Start a list of email addresses of health care writers associated with daily newspapers, community newspapers, TV and radio stations, and national publications (e.g., Modern Healthcare). Include people who write about health or health care for key organizations such as associations, large employers, chambers of commerce, and health plans. Email your news releases to the individuals on this list.
- **Announce your news to community partners.** Be sure to email the news release to your organization’s leadership (e.g., senior leaders, board of directors), committee members, key suppliers or other partners, and elected officials (city, township, county, state and federal delegations) to tell them about your MONAHRQ website and reports. You may want to maintain an email list of these contacts for easier communication in the future.
- **Increase the search engine ranking of your website.** Create a new page on your organization’s website that has the text of your news release in .html format – don’t just link it as a PDF or other document. Hyperlink any references to the MONAHRQ website, specific MONAHRQ reports, and organizations named in the news release. This may increase the likelihood that someone using a search engine will come across your news release and MONAHRQ website. It may also place your content higher in the list of query results in search engines such as Google, Bing or Yahoo.

Think of Reporters as Meta-Consumers. Many reporters and health writers are consumers who happen to be professional communicators to the general public. If your MONAHRQ website and related information is interesting to consumers, it will likely be interesting to these reporters. If it is confusing or not relevant to the general public, it may be hard to get reporters interested too. Before you write your news release, realistically assess the target audiences for your MONAHRQ website (see [Template B](#)) and how it is useful or important to them, then explain it in ways that are relevant to what the general public cares about (not what *you* think they *should* care about). Ask questions like: Based on the content of my MONAHRQ website, how will it be used and by whom? Why would consumers care about that? Will the website, or how it may be used (by hospitals, doctors, health plans, employers, policy makers or others) make consumers' or patients' lives easier or solve a problem for them? One way to get reporters' attention is to take a 'human interest' approach by promoting one or more stories or examples of how your MONAHRQ website can or has made a difference to a person or people in your region.

Pitch the Story to a Specific Reporter or Publication. Some reporters have an area of expertise or angle (e.g., human interest, health care as it affects employers) and some publications have a specific type of audience (e.g., business journals). To increase the likelihood that they will write a story about your MONAHRQ website, identify reasons why that reporter's particular audience will find your MONAHRQ website interesting. For example:

- A **business-oriented publication** may be interested in issues such as: the cost of health care; the economic imperative to improve health care quality; how improved health care impacts the health and productivity of the workforce; or, how increased transparency and accountability can support more effective collaboration among groups who might otherwise be at odds (e.g., large employers working with union leaders, providers with health plans).
- A reporter who writes **human interest stories** may be interested in issues such as: the effect of unsafe or poor quality care on patients or consumers; how increasing access to useful information comparing the quality of care can help patients or consumers; or, the experiences of patients or consumers who get health care from hospitals or other providers that have quality improvement efforts in place. This is also a great way to help hospitals or other providers showcase how they've improved in providing the type of quality health care that is reported in your MONAHRQ website.

Consider content carefully. A news release needs to explain the value of your MONAHRQ website and reports using language that is easily understood by people with no medical training and who do not work in health care. Use simple words, avoid jargon, acronyms and insider phrases. For example, referring to the MONAHRQ website content or results as "measures" may confuse consumers because to most people, "measure" is a verb, not a noun. Describe quality improvement in ways that consumers understand, using concepts that matter to them such as improving safety and health care that works well. Helpful resources to guide how you might describe different concepts include:

- [Plain Language](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/): <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>
- [Talking Quality](https://cahps.ahrq.gov/consumer-reporting/talkingquality): <https://cahps.ahrq.gov/consumer-reporting/talkingquality>

Stick to standard format structure. While traditional media is changing, following basic standards will make your news release straightforward and more effective. First, come up with a title or subject that is clear. The first paragraph should be very short and immediately describe what is the “news” and how it is relevant to current affairs or community concerns. These two things may be the only elements that a reporter reads before deciding whether to use or delete your news release. If possible, keep the entire media release to no more than two pages. If needed, link the media release to additional content or technical information that can be found your organization’s website. Use a standard format: contact information at the top, hyperlink the name of the report and any organizations mentioned, put – *more* – at the bottom when there is another page, and “###” or hatch marks at the end of the release.

See [Template F](#) for a template news release. Even if you completely change the content, the template shows the standard format of a traditional media release.

Using Social Media and Blogs Strategically

Purpose: Social media and blogs are now commonly used in organizational and other professional communication. Both can and should be an important and highly effective part of your activities to promote your MONAHRQ website and reports.

Considerations:

Online culture is a routine part of mass communication. Social media includes websites or networks such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook. Because your goal is to have people use your MONAHRQ website, first they need to know about it and social media can be an effective, widespread promotion channel.

Social media activity can seem random and voluminous; however, it is manageable if you take a strategic approach regarding your purpose and goals for having a presence on one or more social media websites. To get started, pick one of the social media sites and use it for a while, in an informal, less public way, to learn how it works. You control how much time you spend on social media sites, and you will see that there are in-built ways of organizing incoming content and effectively sharing outgoing messages. Commit to checking and updating a few times per day. Being engaged means participating in the conversation, rather than just pushing out information. If people comment, consider the issue and reply. Even a brief response lets social media users know that your organization is listening and interested in what people have to say.

Provide a service. Aim to create a niche for your organization so that people know what kind of information to expect. Add a description to your social media profile pages regarding the type of information you will provide. To determine how best to use social media, including which type of site, for what purpose and at what frequency, consider: Who are the target audiences of your MONAHRQ website? How do you want them to use it? What type of social media do they engage in?

Do your research. Social media channels are a useful resource for conducting research about potential users of your MONAHRQ website and reports, collaborators, and possible competition. Monitoring your news feed can provide insight on industry-specific news, opinion leaders, key organizations and related topics.

Know your networks. All social media tools have a personality and purpose of their own, so it is important to learn the nuances and use them to ensure maximum efficiency and relevancy:

- **Twitter:** Twitter is the fastest moving of the social networks, and frequently used by the media. Each “tweet” or update has the lowest amount of visibility time due to the sheer volume of information being published. This social network should be updated multiple times a day. Spending time curating who you “follow” is essential; find relevant organizations and users to connect with, and hopefully they will “follow” you back and share your content. Updates are limited to 140 characters. One of the most effective uses for Twitter is during events; create a custom “hash tag” to make your tweets easily findable

and use it to provide live updates from the event. Maximum exposure happens when others “retweet” your updates, so to make them highly shareable your tweets should be short, interesting, and relevant.

- **LinkedIn:** The central purpose of this social network is professional networking. User profile pages are essentially online resumes, and the news feed is typically industry-specific, since most people are using the site for professional development and connections. Organizations can create company pages or groups and use them to share news and updates that relate to a certain field or foster conversation. Your LinkedIn page can therefore be more technical and targeted than other social media sites, since your followers are more likely to be part of a common area of industry.
- **Facebook:** This social network is based on personal user accounts. However, organizational pages can be created to provide updates and content about a specific organization and its activities. Users must “like” these pages in order to see content from the page in their own personalized news stream. Anything published on a Facebook page is public, and should be geared toward getting people to engage by “liking,” commenting or “sharing” the news item. Aim for one to two posts per day. Spend time connecting with other organizations by “liking” their pages and “sharing” their content. This will improve the probability of your own content being shared and therefore reaching a wider audience. Plain text is given highest priority in a news feed and is most likely to be seen, followed by pictures and, lastly, links.

Keep it simple and conversational. Social networks tend to be informal, and users expect a conversational tone. Use your social networks as a place to share a diverse range of information, testing out different styles and approaches to see what works best. Updates can range from sharing your published MONAHRQ website, to comments on certain reports, to posting a casual conversation-starter question or sharing a quick progress update.

Give to get. Social media is about relationships and reciprocal efforts. By sharing news and updates from other organizations, you encourage others to help promote your MONAHRQ website and reports. Seeking out and connecting with key organizations can help you recruit new users and collaborators, and spread the word about your MONAHRQ website. Most organizations are grateful for additional attention and expanded networks and are often willing to reciprocate “likes,” “shares,” “retweets” and more. The goal is to share your own content, especially direct links to your MONAHRQ website to increase traffic and broaden awareness; however, social media users are looking for a mutually beneficial relationship. They should not be treated as a passive audience.

Practice good SEO (Search Engine Optimization). Social networks have their own, in-built search tools that can help bring people to your content and MONAHRQ website if you practice SEO techniques, such as gearing your content toward “trending” search terms. See what terms people are using, or stories they are following, and if the terms or stories are relevant, use those terms in your updates so they double as effective keywords.

- **Tap into blogs, too.** Many online newspapers include blogs as a regular feature, either by paying someone to write original blogs or by pulling content from external sources, including independent blogs. Some independent blogs are popular enough to be viable channels for getting information about your MONAHRQ website to your target audiences. Ways to identify which blogs might be important channels for your organization include:
 - Read your local online papers to identify the authors of the regularly featured blogs.
 - Discover and follow bloggers on Twitter. Use a service such as <http://wefollow.com/> to find the top “influencers” on Twitter for specific topic categories, such as #healthcarequality.
- **Think of bloggers as ‘independent’ reporters.** Anyone can write a blog, but some bloggers are able to get more attention to their writing than others. A number of newspapers have hired reporters who are former employees to continue to write for the publication as a blog; however, many bloggers do not come from traditional media. Some are medical professionals with a knack for writing; others are community writers with a strong interest in health care. Some have had bad experiences with health care and have an ax to grind. The range is large. A few examples of health care related blogs include:
 - [Health Blog:](http://blogs.msdn.com/b/healthblog/) <http://blogs.msdn.com/b/healthblog/>
 - [Daily Kaizen Health Blog:](http://www.dailykaizen.org) <http://www.dailykaizen.org>
 - [Sermo:](http://www.sermo.com) <http://www.sermo.com>
 - [Daily Strength:](http://www.dailystrength.org) <http://www.dailystrength.org>
 - [Patients like me:](http://www.patientslikeme.com) <http://www.patientslikeme.com>
 - [Medical Mingle:](http://www.medicalmingle.com) <http://www.medicalmingle.com>
 - [Well Sphere:](http://www.wellsphere.com/home.s) <http://www.wellsphere.com/home.s>
 - [Health IT Sphere:](http://www.hitsphere.com) <http://www.hitsphere.com>
 - [Web MD Blogs:](http://www.webmd.com/community/blogs) <http://www.webmd.com/community/blogs>
 - [Healthline Blogs:](http://www.healthline.com/blogs) <http://www.healthline.com/blogs>
 - [Medline News:](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/newsbydate.html) <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/newsbydate.html>
- **Real communication is important to engage bloggers.** Given the independent nature of most bloggers, building a constructive relationship is likely to involve less structure and more personalized, direct communication. For example:
 - **Approach.** Sending a news release to some bloggers is acceptable, but likely insufficient, as traditional media relations can seem overly structured or “spin.” Send the news release, but then follow up by connecting with them through social media channels, sending a personalized email or calling them by phone to explain the key

messages and discuss the blogger's reactions or questions. There is value in making contact, and even meeting face to face if possible, to begin building the relationship early on, rather than waiting until you are pitching an important story or update about your MONAHRQ website.

- **Be real.** Engaging in authentic (i.e., not scripted) discussions is likely to be interpreted by bloggers as a sign of respect and trust. Don't be afraid to admit what is challenging with measurement and reporting on health care quality, safety, cost or other issues. Trust is a two-way street: just as the blogger wants honest information from you, you hope the blogger writes what is true, includes some (or all?) of your key messages, and isn't exaggerated or sensationalized.

Technology enables nearly anyone to contribute opinions and ideas to the public discourse through social media and blogs. Using these avenues can be a productive and leading-edge way to increase awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website and reports.

Applying Basic Search Engine Optimization Techniques

The purpose of Search Engine Optimization or SEO is to increase the likelihood that people will be able to find your MONAHRQ website and reports using a search engines like Google, Bing or Yahoo. A basic but important way to do that has been described in the section of this toolkit that focuses on getting stakeholders to help promote your MONAHRQ website (see page 8): search engines rank websites higher in search results based, in part, on the number of links to that website from others. The template outreach emails in [Template E](#) can be used to ask your stakeholder partners to link their website to your MONAHRQ website.

In addition, as you create or customized your MONAHRQ website using the MONAHRQ software, choosing and using the right keywords in the page titles, body text and other areas of your MONAHRQ website can help optimize your website for maximum exposure online. The MONAHRQ software also allows you to place keywords in the back end of your MONAHRQ website pages.

The goal for search engines is to provide the most relevant results based on a user's search term or phrase. *Your* goal is to ensure that your MONAHRQ website appears on the first page of search results for queries related to choosing a hospital, improving health care quality, safety, affordability and other relevant content. Given the volume of information on the Internet, vague search terms like "health" will yield vague results. Users are so accustomed to searching that many already effectively search for what they are looking for.

Search Engine Optimization is an ever-changing field. Different search engines use different algorithms to determine the "best" search results, and these algorithms are being constantly updated as technology advances. Therefore, SEO can be a highly technical fulltime effort, and many companies have a dedicated person or team focused on optimizing content for search engines. However, regardless of your technical SEO knowledge, you can apply a few fundamental principles that can boost the chances of your MONAHRQ website and report being ranked better in search engine results.

Some basic SEO techniques are built into the MONAHRQ software and will be part of the steps you take in creating your MONAHRQ website. This includes using target "keywords" as anchors for your website, which search engines will use when "crawling" your MONAHRQ website to determine whether or not it should be included in search results. Choosing the specific keywords, however, is up to you, and picking the best keywords for your website is important.

As you focus on how to inform your target audiences about your MONAHRQ website and encourage them to use it, taking the time to clarify the purpose and target audiences of your publicly-available MONAHRQ website will make SEO fundamentals like keywords easier and more accurate. See [Template A](#) for a worksheet to help you define your target audiences.

- **Content and Word Choice.** When you customize your MONAHRQ website titles and body text, choose descriptions and words that help your defined target audience clearly understand what is in the reports and how they can use them.
- **Research High-Use Keywords and Build Them Into Your MONAHRQ Website.** Researching the most frequently used search terms can inform you about how to best describe your MONAHRQ website. The process involves reviewing the top search terms associated with certain words that are related to your MONAHRQ website, then choosing the terms that are more likely to be used in searches to bring users to your website. Search terms should neither be too general, nor too technical or specific, so striking a balance is key. Several free keyword research tools are available that allow you to input certain words and see the most frequently used variations and related terms, including:
 - [KeywordSpy:](http://www.keywordspy.com/) <http://www.keywordspy.com/>
 - [SEO Book Keyword Tool:](http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-tools/seobook/) <http://tools.seobook.com/keyword-tools/seobook/>
 - [Übersuggest:](http://ubersuggest.org/) <http://ubersuggest.org/>
 - [Keyword Eye:](http://www.keywordeye.com/) <http://www.keywordeye.com/>
- **Consider Search Volume and Competition for Specific Search Terms.** By researching keywords, you will discover differences between the words or phrases (“terms”) that users are using to search and the words you are using in your MONAHRQ website to describe its content. Ideally, the words in your MONAHRQ website will match the terms people use to find websites that have the information they want. When considering the most valuable terms to use, look for the search volume and the level of competition for each term.
 - *Search volume* is the frequency with which people use this term to try to find what they are looking for online. A high search volume means that this term is used a lot by people who are searching online.
 - *Competition* is the degree to which other websites are using this term as a keyword. A high level of competition means that many other websites are likely to appear in the results when people search online using this term.
- Ideally, you want to select words that have **high** search volume but **low** competition. Some words are not ideal, such as the term “health care reports,” may have a low search volume yet a high level of competition. This means that using that particular phrase with your MONAHRQ website is unlikely to rank it highly in search engine results and your target audiences are not likely to be using this term in their searches anyway. Meanwhile, a term like “consumer reports health care,” may have a high search volume but a relatively low competition level, and may be better suited for your needs.

You can use this information to make the most of the MONAHRQ software website generation wizard as you enter keywords to optimize the site for search engines, and customize titles or descriptive text in your MONAHRQ website and reports. For more information on keyword entry using the website creation wizard, see page 60 of the [Host User Guide](http://monahrq.ahrq.gov/monahrq_resources.shtml) available for download at http://monahrq.ahrq.gov/monahrq_resources.shtml.

Evaluating the Impact of Website Promotion Activities

Understanding your audience, creating a promotion plan, defining key messages, engaging partners to help with the communication activities, building your presence on social media networks, and implementing good SEO techniques can all help increase awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website. Basic evaluation is important to know whether your efforts are working and if any aspect of your approach needs to be refined to continue to grow awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website and reports. A template for a basic evaluation matrix is found in [Template G](#).

Few organizations have a large budget for evaluation and many have little or none; however, that does not mean that evaluation is impossible or unimportant. Regardless of the available staff or financial resources, understanding how you plan to evaluate your efforts – including knowing the sources of information for the assessment – will ensure that you are able to conduct the evaluation. Having a plan for evaluation allows you to begin collecting the information to assess the impact of various activities at the appropriate time.

Other than the website analytics described below, much of the information for your evaluation may need to come from your own assessment of newsletter articles or other media coverage about your MONAHRQ website, in addition to anecdotal examples, and data collected through informal or formal surveys. The template in [Template G](#) offers suggestions for potential evaluation elements and the possible data sources for each.

Website analytic reports are extremely helpful to assess the use of your MONAHRQ website. These reports typically provide extensive data, such as:

- Visitors (number of visits, new visitors, repeat visitors)
- Page views (page views, pages per visit, bounce rate)
- Site connections and traffic sources (visits by browser, referring sites, direct traffic, search engines, top traffic sources, most popular content)

Using this information, you will be able to assess the percentage of traffic from search engines where people have typed in a search term and found your MONAHRQ website or report through the search engine results. It also shows how many people typed in the actual URL to your MONAHRQ website ('direct' traffic). You can also use this information to see how many people came to your MONAHRQ website by clicking on a link from a "referring website" such as a blog, news article, social media website, or the website of a partner organization that added a link to your MONAHRQ website or reports to their website.

Depending on your promotion plan, you can see whether your efforts are paying off. For example:

- If your strategy is to ask partner organizations such as health plans and employers to link their website with open enrollment information directly to your MONAHRQ website, then you would want to see an increase in the traffic coming from that referring website.
- If a primary strategy in your promotion plan is to optimize your MONAHRQ website to be easy to find using search engines, you would expect to see a high percentage of traffic from search engines.

Website Analytics Tools. There are a variety of free or low-cost tools available. Examples include:

- [ClickTale](http://www.clicktale.com): <http://www.clicktale.com>
- [Compete](https://www.compete.com/): <https://www.compete.com/>
- [Google Analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics): <http://www.google.com/analytics>
- [Mouseflow](http://mouseflow.com): <http://mouseflow.com>
- [StatCounter](http://statcounter.com): <http://statcounter.com>
- [TracemyIP.org](http://www.tracemyip.org): <http://www.tracemyip.org>
- [W3 Counter](http://www.w3counter.com): <http://www.w3counter.com>
- [Woopra](http://www.woopra.com): <http://www.woopra.com>
- [Yahoo!WebAnalytics](http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/ywa/faqs/overview/overview-01.html): <http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/ywa/faqs/overview/overview-01.html>

Template A: Worksheet to Help Define Your Target Audiences

Before developing your key messages and putting together a promotion plan, use this worksheet to guide your thinking regarding your primary and secondary target audiences. Your answers will help determine the actions to take to maximize the likelihood that your primary target audiences will access and use your MONAHRQ website and reports.

1. What is the intended purpose and overall goal for your MONAHRQ website?

Possible answers might include: satisfying legislative or regulatory requirements; supporting incentives for improvement by informing the decision-making of policy makers (e.g., program leaders in hospitals or other organizations or agencies), purchasers (e.g., public and private employers, union trusts), individuals (e.g., consumers, patients, family members), or health plans; creating 'reputational' incentives for leaders in hospitals and medical groups who want to improve their results relative to their peers and competitors; and/or improving performance within an organization or across a network by conducting internal validation of data and sharing information.

2. Who do you expect will use your MONAHRQ website and reports?

Some audiences will be higher priority because of the impact they can make to help reach your goals. These are primary audiences. There are likely secondary audiences, especially for publicly available reporting websites, who will see the website and may find interest in it. Consider whether your MONAHRQ website will be public, private (accessible only inside an organization), or semi-private (accessible to those with a password or log-in credentials). Which types of groups will be able to access your site and how will they likely use the reports? How might they each respond? Example audiences include: patients and other consumers; hospital leaders; doctors and other providers; policy makers; employers or health plans; and, the media and other opinion leaders.

3. What decisions important to your primary target audiences will drive them to need or want to use the information in your MONAHRQ website or reports?

Your answer may differ based on the specific target audience. For example¹ consumers are most likely to seek out information at times when they move or change health insurance, their doctor is no longer available, they need health care but don't have a referral, their health needs or conditions change, they have a negative experience with health care, or they want to provide resources and recommendations to others. Health plans and employers may want to use this information during open enrollment to encourage members or employees to consider quality when making health care decisions, or during contract negotiations with providers. Hospitals and other providers may want to use it when designing health improvement programs, making referrals to other providers, or negotiating contracts with health plans and employers. Policy analysts may want this information when preparing legislative briefs or assessing the status of health policies.

4. What are the most likely ways that your target audiences will find and access your website?

Answers are likely to differ for each target audience. For example, based on the decision-points described above, a consumer may look at health plan lists of participating hospitals or doctors or seek open enrollment information from their employer. They might also look online using search engines or going to health related groups. They may ask others with similar health needs, either in person or in online forums. Many consumers seek answers or help from public libraries, health plans or government agencies. Other audiences, such as hospitals and providers, may go to professional associations. Employers might turn to Chambers of Commerce, economic development councils, or health plans, brokers and agents. Policy analysts may seek information from government agencies or universities.

¹ [Consumer Decision Points of Health Care Information](http://www.waqualitycenter.org/Portals/0/Statewide%20Initiatives/AF4Q/RWJF_Report_ConsEngage.pdf), Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2010: http://www.waqualitycenter.org/Portals/0/Statewide Initiatives/AF4Q/RWJF_Report_ConsEngage.pdf

5. What aspects or reports in your MONAHRQ website are likely to satisfy the information needs of your target audience(s)?

Based on your notes above, which reports or specific content in your MONAHRQ website can be useful to your target audiences at key decision-points? While some reports will be extremely valuable to certain audiences, not all reports will be useful for all audiences.

Use your answers and notes on this worksheet to spur thinking about creative approaches and specific actions to enable your target audiences to easily find your MONAHRQ website, see how it is relevant to their needs, and use the information to make informed decisions that help improve health care quality, safety, affordability and patient experience.

Template B: Promotion Plan

Use this template to create a 12-month plan, identifying internal and external milestones to guide efforts to promote your MONAHRQ website. Your prepared plan is intended to become a working document to guide monthly actions. Refine it on an ongoing basis. Customize each of the elements to fit your organization's circumstances, priorities and goals. Several examples are provided for illustration purposes only.

Communication Goals / Objectives [for illustration only]

1. Build awareness of **[name of MONAHRQ website]** among **[target audiences, such as patients and other consumers, health plans, employers, hospitals and other providers, reporters and policy makers]**
2. Increase understanding of problems in the quality, cost and efficiency of health care in this region, and how the evidence-based reports can be used to help address the need
3. Attract and engage primary target audiences and motivate them to use the reports to improve quality and cost of health care

Communication Strategies [for illustration only]

1. Establish and communicate compelling and effective messages about the **[name of MONAHRQ website]**
2. Position the **[name of MONAHRQ website]** as the primary source of trusted and useful information to help people make informed decisions about quality, cost-effective health care in this region
3. Engage partners to help promote the **[name of MONAHRQ website]**, with emphasis on organizations (and their newsletters, websites and other communication methods) that are trusted by our target audiences at times when health care decisions are made

Activities [for illustration only]

1. Engage at least three partner groups, agencies or organizations in the development of key messages and ongoing communication activities, as active partners in promoting the **[name of MONAHRQ website]** to their own internal and external audiences
2. Develop shared messages regarding the **[name of MONAHRQ website]** and the need it addresses, and train staff and spokespeople from key stakeholders to use the messages
3. Engage in a coordinated outreach and media campaign to earn frequent mentions of the **[name of MONAHRQ website]** in local print, broadcast and social media

COORDINATED PROMOTION PLAN

[The example content included below is for illustration only. Before using this plan, replace and expand the content to fit your needs.]

JANUARY						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
Preparation for Release of MONAHRQ Report	Contact partners to ask them to link to their website and include article in newsletter	Our team (name a specific person)	List names of specific partner organizations	Email text Draft newsletter text	[date]	Follow up with a phone call to discuss process and timing
FEBRUARY						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
Release of MONAHRQ Report	Distribute media release	Our team (name a specific person)	Media and community opinion leaders	Media release	[date]	Post on organizational website; gather quotes to include in media packet
External Opportunity (1): Heart health month: Highlight cardiac services reports on website	Send out a list-serve email to highlight cardiac related reports on the website	Our team (name a specific person)	Ask Heart Association chapter to link to their website	Draft email text Draft text for website link	[date]	Talk with heart association about joint social media promotion too
MARCH						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
APRIL						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES

MAY						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
JUNE						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
JULY						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
AUGUST						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
SEPTEMBER						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES
OCTOBER						
TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES

NOVEMBER

TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES

DECEMBER

TOPIC	Activity	Who Initiates	Target Audience	Materials	Timing	NOTES

Template C: List of Annual Health Observances

The following partial list of health observances in the USA may offer opportunities to promote relevant content from your MONAHRQ website and reports. These observances often spur special communication and other activities by one or more organizations. Some last a full month, others a week, and others are observed on a specific day. The actual dates differ each year, so please refer to the following websites for current observance date information:

- [Healthfinder.gov National Health Observances page](http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/): <http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/>
- [WELCOA \(The Wellness Council of America\) Health Observances page](http://www.welcoa.org/observances/): <http://www.welcoa.org/observances/>
- [Awareness Depot Awareness Calendar](http://www.awarenessdepot.com/awarenesscalendar.html): <http://www.awarenessdepot.com/awarenesscalendar.html>
- [CDC Women’s Health page](http://www.cdc.gov/Women/observances/index.htm): <http://www.cdc.gov/Women/observances/index.htm>

January

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Cervical Cancer Screening Month	Folic Acid Awareness Week
Cervical Health Awareness Month	Healthy Weight Week
Birth Defects Prevention Month	Medical Group Practice Week
Blood Donor Month	Women’s Healthy Weight Day
Glaucoma Awareness Month	Thyroid Awareness Month

February

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
American Heart Month; Wear Red Day / Heart Disease; Women’s Heart Health Day	Burn Awareness Week
Children’s Ear, Nose, Throat Month	Cardiac Rehabilitation Week
Children’s Dental Health Month	Cardiovascular Professionals Week
Low Vision Awareness Month	Eating Disorders Awareness Week
International Prenatal Infection Prevention Month	Girls and Women in Sports Day
Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Week	Give Kids a Smile Day / Dental Care

March

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
American Red Cross Month	American Diabetes Alert Day
Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Month	Brain Awareness Week
Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month	Doctors' Day
Endometriosis Awareness Month	Patient Safety Awareness Week
Save Your Vision Month; Workplace Eye Safety Month; Eye Donor Month	Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week
Hemophilia Month	Multiple Sclerosis Education & Awareness Month
Kidney Month	Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

April

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Alcohol Awareness Month	Alcohol Screening Day
Autism Awareness Month	Earth Day
Cancer Control Month	Health Information Privacy & Security Week
Cesarean Awareness Month	Infant Immunization Week
Child Abuse Prevention Month	Infertility Awareness Week
Donate Life Month	Kick Butts Day
Humor Month	Minority Cancer Awareness Week
Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month	Parkinson's Awareness Week
Minority Health Awareness Month	Public Health Week
STD Awareness Month	World Health Day
Women's Eye Health and Safety Month	Youth Sports Safety Month

May

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
American Stroke Month	Asthma Day
Arthritis Awareness Month	Bike to Work Week
Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month	Childhood Depression Awareness Day
Better Hearing and Speech Month	Cover the Uninsured Week
Better Sleep Month	Fibromyalgia Awareness Day
Bike Month	HIV Vaccine Awareness Day
Breathe Easy Month	Hospital Week
Cancer Research Month	Mental Health Counseling Week
Healthy Vision Month	Neuropathy Week
Hepatitis Awareness Month	North American Occupational Safety and Health Week
Lupus Awareness Month	Nurses Week
Lyme Disease Awareness Month	Nursing Home Week
Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month	Older Americans Mental Health Week
High Blood Pressure Education Month	Running and Fitness Week
Mental Health Month	School Nurses Day
Older Americans Month	Senior Health & Fitness Day
Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month	Women's Check-up Day
Physical Fitness and Sports Month	Women's Health Week
Preeclampsia Awareness Month	World Hepatitis Day
Skin Cancer Awareness Month	World No Tobacco Day
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month	Trauma Awareness Month

June

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Clean Air Month	Blood Donor Day
Congenital Cytomegalovirus Awareness Month	Eye Safety Awareness Week
Fireworks Safety Month	Headache Awareness Week
Home Safety Month	HIV Testing Day
Scleroderma Awareness Month	Men's Health Week

July

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Eye Injury Prevention Month	Alzheimer's Awareness Week
International Group B Strep Awareness Month	Childhood Obesity Week
UV Safety Month	

August

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Breastfeeding Month; World Breastfeeding Week	Minority Donor Awareness Day
Cataract Awareness Month	National Health Center Week
Immunization Awareness Month	Pain Awareness Month
Psoriasis Awareness Month	Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month

September

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month	Adult Immunization Week
Cholesterol Education Month	Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month; Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
Leukemia & Lymphoma Awareness Month	Family Health & Fitness Day USA; Women's Health & Fitness Day; Healthy Aging Month
World Heart Day	Rehabilitation Awareness Week
World Alzheimer's Day	Suicide Prevention Day; Suicide Prevention Week

October

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
American Heart Walk	Bone and Joint Decade National Awareness Week
Brain Injury Awareness Month	Health Care Quality Week; Infection Control Week
Breast Cancer Awareness Month; National Mammography Day	Primary Care Week
Campaign for Healthier Babies	Mental Illness Awareness Week; National Depression Screening Day; World Mental Health Day; Depression & Mental Health Month
Health Literacy Month	National Child Health Day; Children's Health Month
Cold and Flu Campaign	Respiratory Care Week
Dental Hygiene Month	Healthy Living Month; Family Health Month
Halloween Safety Month	Pharmacy Week

November

Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
American Diabetes Month	Diabetes Day
COPD Awareness Month	Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease Awareness Week
Diabetic Eye Disease Month	Health Information and Technology Week
Epilepsy Awareness Month	Flu and Pneumonia Campaign
Family Caregivers Month	Great American Smokeout
Lung Cancer Awareness Month	Hospice Month
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month	Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness Month

December

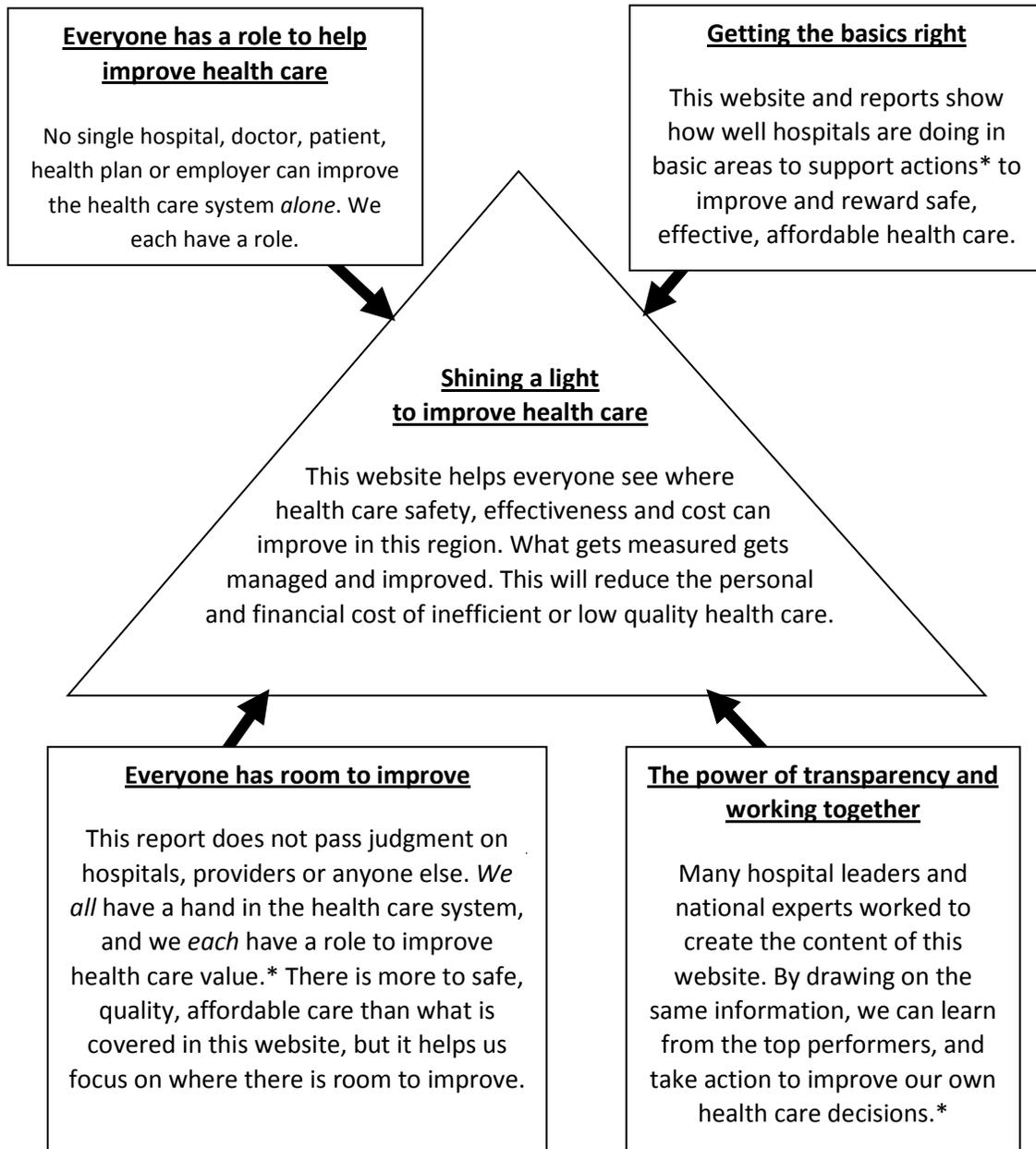
Monthly Observances	Daily/Weekly Observances
Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month	National Hand Washing Awareness Week
Safe Toys and Gifts Month	World AIDS Day

Template D: Key Messages Format

Customize these messages based on your target audiences and how they will use the reports.

KEY MESSAGES FOR PROMOTING [YOUR MONAHRQ WEBSITE]

Consistently use these messages to communicate about the website and reports. No matter which message you start with, use it to bridge to the message in the center and then to the other messages.



***How to Use the Website and Reports to Improve Health Care**

No single hospital or other provider, patient, health plan, or employer can improve the health care system alone. We encourage everyone to do his or her part by using the information in **[name of your MONAHRQ website]**. If we each take one or more of the steps below, we can help ensure that health care in this region is as safe, effective, and affordable as possible:

PATIENTS AND OTHER INDIVIDUALS

1. Use the reports to see how your hospital scores in different topic areas and ask your doctor or care team if you have any questions about the information.
2. When choosing a provider or making other decisions, use this information. If you decide to make changes based on this information, tell your former provider or hospital why you are making this change as it might help to spur them to improve.
3. Look up information about topics that interest you – such as heart disease or surgery – to see how your provider compares, then talk with your doctor about what you can do to be as safe and healthy as possible.

HOSPITAL LEADERS, DOCTORS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

1. Use the reports to see how well your hospital or medical group compares to others, and work with your peers to learn from each other and improve overall approaches to care.
2. Talk with patients about effective care that is best for them and communicate with them and the larger community about your organization's scores in the **[website name]**.
3. Review your organization's scores in the **[website name]** during contract discussions with health plans and other payers.
4. Use features and content like maps and utilization rates in **[website name]** to identify patterns and improvement priorities in the community.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EMPLOYERS, HEALTH PLANS AND UNION TRUSTS

1. Use the **[website name]** to ensure that the benefits you offer cover all of the types of effective care that are described in the online reports, without barriers that may prevent patients from getting the safest, most effective and affordable care.
2. Inform your employees or members about the **[website name]** and encourage them to use the reports to ask questions and make informed decisions about their health care.
3. Review the scores in the reports during contract discussions with health care providers and others, and discuss payment approaches that will reward improvement.

POLICY MAKERS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

1. Use the [**website name**] to assess how the health care system in your region scores relative to national benchmarks.
2. Use features and content like maps and utilization rates in [**website name**] to help identify improvement priorities to pursue.
3. Review the scores in the reports during program or policy discussions, and consider incentives that can reward and help to drive greater improvement.

Template E: Text for Outreach Emails, Plus Sample Newsletter Article

Customize the text below for use when emailing specific audiences to ask them to help promote your MONAHRQ website. Attach the template newsletter article when needed.

#1 TEMPLATE EMAIL: OUTREACH TO PARTNERS WHO WILL HAVE ACCESS TO AN INTERNAL OR PRIVATE VERSION OF YOUR MONAHRQ WEBSITE

To: [Target INTERNAL/PRIVATE Audience]

Subject: Ready to Use [NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]?

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION, DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY] is pleased to announce that [NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] will soon be available on our internal network or a password-protected site. There you will be able to access to the latest hospital measure results in our area, based on aggregated data. The website has a number of easily understandable, evidence-based health care reports on quality, cost and patient experience. To access the site, go to [insert URL here and explain how to get a password, if one is needed].

The [NAME OF WEBSITE] gives you and others in [name of organization, department, agency] access to reports such as:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus rates of use of specific inpatient services and emergency departments
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

Please encourage others in your [DIVISION, DEPARTMENT, AGENCY] to use [NAME OF WEBSITE] too, by adding a URL or hyperlink of the website to your own internal website or reports. Will you also include a notice about this new reporting website in your internal newsletter? Attached is a template newsletter article that you can use.

We are offering a [WEBINAR/BRIEFING] about this new website on [MONTH/DATE] at [TIME]. Register by responding to this email. We will provide an overview of the website's features, plus tips on using the reports to inform your work.

If you have questions or need any assistance, please contact us at [EMAIL].

#2 TEMPLATE EMAILS – SEVERAL VERSIONS FOR OUTREACH TO SPECIFIC TYPES OF PARTNERS, REGARDING A PUBLICLY AVAILABLE VERSION OF YOUR MONAHRQ WEBSITE

To: *[HOSPITAL, MEDICAL GROUP OR PROVIDER ASSOCIATION NAME]*

Subject: Ready to Use *[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]*?

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] is pleased to announce that *[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]* will soon be available to the public. There you will be able to access to the latest hospital and other health care measure results in the region, based on aggregated data. The website has a number of easily understandable, evidence-based reports on health care quality, cost and patient experience, *[in addition to statistical and data details for use by analysts, researchers and others]*. To access the site and reports, go to *[insert URL here]*.

These reports allow anyone to compare hospital performance, identify best practices or top performers, assess utilization rates, and compare to national benchmarks and standards. This increases transparency in the market, supports informed decision-making, and can help to drive improvement that results in higher quality care, lower costs and more engaged patients.

[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] gives access to reports such as:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus inpatient and emergency department utilization
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

Please encourage your staff to use *[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]* too, by adding the URL or hyperlink (shown above) to your internal and external website and to relevant online materials. Will you also include a notice about this new reporting website in newsletters to your employees, and to your partners such as other health care providers, health plans and medical suppliers? Attached is a template newsletter article that you can easily customize and use.

Thank you for your help in spreading the word about this important new resource for the entire region. If you have questions or need any assistance, please contact us at *[EMAIL]*.

To: **[HEALTH PLAN NAME]**

Subject: Ready to Use **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]**?

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] is pleased to announce that **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** will soon be available to the public. There you will be able to access to the latest hospital measure results in our area, based on aggregated data. The website has a number of easily understandable, evidence-based reports on health care quality, cost and patient experience, **[in addition to the statistical and data detail for use by analysts, researchers and others]**. To access the site and reports, go to **[insert URL here]**.

These reports allow anyone to compare hospital performance, identify best practices or top performers, assess rates of service use, and compare to national benchmarks. This increases transparency in the health care market, supports informed decision-making, and drives improvement that can result in higher quality care, lower costs and more engaged consumers.

[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] gives access to reports such as:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus rates of use of specific inpatient services and emergency departments
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

Please encourage your members and others in your organization to use **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** too, by adding the URL or hyperlink (shown above) to your own website and to relevant online materials such as information about benefits, provider selection and open enrollment. Will you also include a notice about this new reporting website in your newsletters to your employees and to your partners such as agents and brokers, your employer customers, and contracted hospitals and other providers? Attached is a template newsletter article that you can easily customize and use.

Thank you for your help in spreading the word about this important new resource for the entire region. If you have questions or need any assistance, please contact us at **[EMAIL]**.

To: [EMPLOYER, CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OR OTHER BUSINESS GROUP NAME]

Subject: Ready to Use the [NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]?

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] is pleased to announce that **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** will soon be available to the public. There you will be able to access to the latest hospital measure results in our area, based on aggregated data. The website has a number of easily understandable, evidence-based reports on health care quality, cost and patient experience. To access the site and reports, go to **[insert URL here]**.

These reports allow anyone to compare hospital performance, identify best practices or top performers, assess rates of service use, and compare to national benchmarks. This increases transparency in the health care market, supports informed decision-making, and drives improvement that can result in higher quality care, lower costs and more engaged consumers.

[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] gives access to reports such as:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus rates of use of specific inpatient services and emergency departments
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

Please encourage your employees to use **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** too, by adding the URL or hyperlink (shown above) to your own website and to relevant online materials such as information about benefits and open enrollment. Will you also include a notice about this new reporting website in newsletters to your employees and your partners such as suppliers, members **[for Chambers or business groups]** and your customers? Attached is a template newsletter article that you can easily customize and use.

Thank you for your help in spreading the word about this important new resource for the entire region. If you have questions or need any assistance, please contact us at **[EMAIL]**.

To: [STATE OR OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY NAME]

Subject: Ready to Use the [NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]?

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] is pleased to announce that **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** will soon be available to the public. There you will be able to access to the latest hospital measure results in our area, based on aggregated data. The website has a number of easily understandable, evidence-based reports on health care quality, cost and patient experience, **[in addition to the statistical and data detail for use by analysts, researchers and others]**. To access the site and reports, go to **[insert URL here]**.

These reports allow anyone to compare hospital performance, identify best practices or top performers, assess utilization rates, and compare to national benchmarks and standards. This increases transparency in the market, supports informed decision-making, and can help to drive improvement that results in higher quality care, lower costs and more engaged consumers.

[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] gives access to reports such as:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus inpatient and emergency department utilization
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

Please encourage your staff members to use **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** too, by adding the URL or hyperlink (shown above) to your internal website and to relevant online materials. Will you also include a notice about this new reporting website in newsletters to your employees and community partners? Attached is a template newsletter article that you can easily customize and use.

Thank you for your help in spreading the word about this important new resource for the entire region. If you have questions or need any assistance, please contact us at **[EMAIL]**.

To: [CONSUMER ADVOCACY GROUPS OR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION NAME]

Subject: Ready to Use the [NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] to Compare Local Health Care?

[NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] is pleased to announce that **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** will soon be available to the public. There anyone will be able to access to the latest hospital ratings in our area. The website has a number of easily understandable, evidence-based reports on health care quality, cost and patient experience. To access the site and reports, go to **[insert URL here]**.

These reports allow anyone to compare hospital performance, identify top performers, see how often certain services are provided, and compare to national averages or other benchmarks. This puts information directly into the hands of patients, family members and others to support informed decision-making that helps to improve quality care, affordability and patients' experience with health care.

[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE] gives access to reports such as:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus rates of the use of hospital inpatient and emergency department services
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

Please encourage your members and employees to use **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** by adding the URL or hyperlink (shown above) to your website and to any of your online materials relevant to health care. Will you also include a notice about this new reporting website in newsletters to your employees, consumer members and community partners? Attached is a template newsletter article that you can easily customize and use.

Thank you for your help in spreading the word about this important new resource for the entire region. If you have questions or need any assistance, please contact us at **[EMAIL]**.

#3 TEMPLATE ARTICLE – TO BE CUSTOMIZED THEN SENT WITH OUTREACH EMAILS ASKING PARTNERS TO INCLUDE A SHORT ARTICLE IN THEIR NEWSLETTERS

Compare Health Care Quality, Cost and Patient Experience Using the New *[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]*

When you make decisions about health and health care, be sure they are informed decisions. The new ***[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]*** offers a range of reports on the quality and safety of care provided in hospitals in this region, in addition to information about the cost, rates of use of certain services, and patients' views about their care experience. You can find the reporting website at ***[INSERT MONAHRQ website URL]***.

With important information in the hands of patients, doctors and other health care providers, health plans, employers and others, decisions can be made to improve quality, affordability and patient experience. The reports now available in this region include:

- Comparisons of hospital quality, plus rates of the use of hospital and emergency department services
- Hospital profiles, showing location, patient experience ratings and cost by the top diagnosis groups at that hospital
- Estimated cost savings that could be achieved by reducing potentially avoidable hospitalizations
- Maps of preventable hospitalizations and hospital service use rates for conditions and procedures, shown by county or region

This reporting website was created by ***[Name of Host Organization]***, using MONAHRQ software developed by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. For more information, go to ***[Host Organization's website URL]***.

Template F: Media Release

Customize the template media release below to reflect the goals and content of your MONAHRQ website. Revise the title and first sentence to reference actual rates from your MONAHRQ website as a compelling lead-in. For example, highlight potential cost savings from reducing preventable hospitalizations, or compare safety scores in the region or against national averages. Use the data to highlight where improvement is needed or actions that are being or could be taken to improve safety, quality, affordability and patient experience.

[INSERT YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LOGO]



Media Contact

[name of media contact]

[phone number]

[email address]

Compare Hospital Quality, Cost and Patient Experience Using the New [NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]

[CITY NAME], [Date] – The new **[NAME OF MONAHRQ WEBSITE]** offers a range of reports on the quality and safety of care provided in hospitals in this region, in addition to information about the cost, rates of use of certain services, and patients' views about their care experience. The reporting website can be found at **[INSERT MONAHRQ website URL]**.

[List primary audiences: consumers, health plans, employers, policy makers, hospital leaders, health care providers or other] can use the website to look up and compare hospital quality, safety and the frequency that certain health care services are provided in the region.

The website was created using MONAHRQ software developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to improve transparency, safety, quality, patient experience and

affordability of care. The website reflects leading edge research in best practices in reporting, evidence-based measures and data sources, and national standards and benchmarks for comparison.

[Insert a quote from a trusted leader in your organization or region, stating the goal of your MONAHRQ website or explaining the implications of specific report findings for the region, if this is used as an angle for the media release.]

The scores and other information in the reports are based on ***[give examples of the data sources used such as: local hospital inpatient and emergency department discharge data; AHRQ Quality Indicator results; measure results from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Hospital Compare; and/or patient experience survey results from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems]***. Examples of reports include: ***[list reports included in your MONAHRQ website such as the quality of hospital care —comparison ratings by hospital and health topic; Inpatient and emergency department utilization —the number of discharges by condition and procedure, along with the estimated cost by hospital; potentially avoidable hospital stays resulting from complications arising while a patient is in care, along with a cost estimator based on reducing preventable hospital stays; hospital discharge rates; and estimated costs and cost savings association with avoidable hospital admissions]***. The interactive reports include rates and rankings for hospitals, along with a profile of each hospital, in maps and tables.

[Insert a quote from a trusted leader in the region, describing the importance of transparency in health care performance, and how one or more of the reports are being or will be used to improve the quality, safety, affordability or patient experience in regional health care.]

The MONAHRQ software has allowed ***[Organization name]*** a low-cost solution to providing ***[geographic region/area served]*** with a health care reporting website. The ***[Organization name or name of website]*** website is available at [URL]. [Information about MONAHRQ](#) can be found at <http://monahrq.ahrq.gov/>.

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Template G: Evaluating Your Promotional Efforts

Use the matrix below to identify ways to evaluate the impact of your promotion efforts. Gather and track this information over time to assess changes in awareness and use of your MONAHRQ website and to modify efforts as appropriate to improve results.

Activity: Engaging partners to help raise awareness of the website and reports	Possible Data Source	Applicable?
Number (or percentage of) partners that post a link to the reporting website on their website	Survey	
Number (or percentage of) partners that include an article in their internal newsletter	Survey	
Number (or percentage of) partners that include an article in one or more external newsletter(s)	Survey	
Activity: Generating media coverage of the website and reports	Possible Data Source	Applicable?
Number of stories in radio, TV, newspapers, magazines or other print media	Web search and tracking	
Percentage of media stories that use one or more key messages	Web search and tracking	
Percentage of media stories that include a hyperlink to the reporting website or its URL	Web search and tracking	
Activity: Generating interest in the reporting website using social media	Possible Data Source	Applicable?
Number of posts about the reporting website in specific social media sites	Search and tracking	
Number of “shares” or re-tweets of posts about the reporting website in social media sites	Search and tracking	
Number of click-throughs to the reporting website from social media sites	Social media site statistics or website analytics	

Activity: Holding promotional events to share information with key stakeholders	Possible Data Source	Applicable?
Number of promotional webinars or other events	Count	
Number of participants attending each promotional webinar or other event	Count	
Percentage of webinar or event participants who say they are likely to use the reporting website	Survey	
Activity: Direct email contact with target audiences	Possible Data Source	Applicable?
Number of email opens - <i>“How many times did people look at the email?”</i>	Statistics from email campaign service provider	
Number of email click-throughs – <i>“How many times did the recipients click on the reporting website URL or link?”</i>	Statistics from email campaign service provider	
Number of email forwards – <i>“How many recipients forwarded the email to someone else?”</i>	Statistics from email campaign service provider	
Activity: Attracting traffic to the reporting website	Possible Data Source	Applicable?
Number of website visitors, unique visitors	Statistics from website analytic service provider	
Number of page views, pages per visit, time on website, bounce rate	Statistics from website analytic service provider	
Number and percentage of website visitors, by source type	Statistics from website analytic service provider	