**PRESS RELEASE**

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**MAINE HEALTH DATA ORGANIZATION INTRODUCES NEW HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND COST COMPARISON WEBSITE**

Augusta, Maine, October 27, 2015 -- The Maine Health Data Organization (MHDO) has launched [www.CompareMaine.org](http://www.CompareMaine.org) a new health care transparency website. Consumers can use the new website to compare the average cost of over 200 medical procedures at more than 170 health care facilities in the state. They can also use the site to compare quality ratings for many facilities.

“In Maine and across the nation, there can be large differences in the cost and quality for the same health care service. You may pay a lot more for the same procedure depending on where you go,” said Governor LePage. “Many of us are paying higher out-of-pocket costs for our health care services. I hope that by making this information available, consumers and employers will be positioned to make better informed decisions.”

“This launch is the culmination of an enormous effort,” said Lisa Harvey McPherson, Chair of the MHDO Board of Directors. Grant funds from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services made the new website possible. MHDO created CompareMaine in collaboration with researchers from the Human Services Research Institute and NORC at the University of Chicago and web designer Wowza.

“CompareMaine differs from other health care transparency tools in a few key ways,” said Karynlee Harrington, Acting Executive Director of MHDO. “The first is the comprehensiveness of its coverage. CompareMaine displays the average costs for more than 200 health care procedures. Users can compare costs by facility—including hospitals, surgical centers, diagnostic imaging centers, labs, and clinics—and by health insurance companies in the state of Maine. Second, Maine’s health care transparency site is one of only two state sites that present quality ratings alongside cost information. These ratings show how patients rank their overall experience and how Maine hospitals compare on keeping patients safe.”

The MHDO convened a consumer advisory group over 18 months ago to provide feedback to the Agency on the content, design and functionality of the new website. “Using this website and making decisions based on the information it provides is one of the best ways for patients to engage and take responsibility for their own health care. This website gives patients choices,” said the consumer advisory group. The group went on to say, “As consumers, it’s been a pleasure for us to work with the MHDO. They asked our opinion and they listened and acted on many of our suggestions. Consumers were genuinely involved in the creation of this website. We are proud of what we have made together.”

“We look forward to people visiting our new website and providing us with feedback through the online survey form. We will be updating the cost information on the site twice a year; the quality data will be updated accordingly, and we will make other updates as needed,” said Harrington.

**About MHDO**

The Maine Health Data Organization is a state agency that collects health care data from insurance companies and stores them in a highly secure database called an All-Payer Claims Database. This database is the source of the cost information for CompareMaine. The quality ratings on CompareMaine come from Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) surveys administered by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.