



Wisconsin Medical Society

Your Doctor. Your Health.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Information Contact:

Steve Busalacchi

(608) 442-3746/800-762-8977

Cell (608) 576-2274

Steveb@wismed.org

Audit Bureau Slams POVD

“Serious concerns with the quality, comparability, and comprehensiveness of the data”

Madison (April 19, 2005) After spending almost \$3 million over several years to collect physician outpatient visit data (POVD), the Legislative Audit Bureau finds “DHFS has yet to produce information that is usable by the general public.”

The program was initially touted as a way to create a centralized data bank that could be used to compare health care quality. But from the beginning, the Wisconsin Medical Society opposed the effort because the information to be collected was already available from other sources and would not be useful in assessing quality measures.

The Audit Bureau report confirms what doctors had said from the beginning. “We found numerous problems with the program, including serious concerns with the quality, comparability, and comprehensiveness of the data,” wrote Janice Mueller, State Auditor, to Senator Carol Roessler and Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chairpersons of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee.

“It’s a shame that this program ever got off the ground, especially when you consider the wasted time and money that went into it,” said Susan Turney, MD, EVP/CEO of the Wisconsin Medical Society. In fact, the audit discovered that only 6.2 full time equivalent DHFS staff worked on the POVD projects, even though “it is authorized 12.29 full-time equivalent positions.”

“Resources were diverted to other BHI projects rather than addressing the Society's reliability and validity concerns that now the legislative audit bureau has confirmed,” added Dr. Turney. She says to improve quality of care, an apples to apples comparison of useful measures is required. “Unfortunately the POVD project never made a commitment to merging data across health systems in a responsible way,” said Dr. Turney.

As a cost saving measure for the future, the Society has proposed, with public/private oversight, hosting physician specific data to help consumers learn about doctors and their background. Currently, the state now holds such information in three separate databases. “This would eliminate data entry duplication, be less costly to maintain and reduce the government’s personnel costs,” explained Dr. Turney. It would also have the advantage of making physician information available to the public in one place.

With respect to POVD, State Auditor Mueller writes that the Legislature should address its many problems or “may choose to eliminate the program immediately.”

The Wisconsin Medical Society is the largest association of medical doctors in the state with more than 10,000 members dedicated to the best interests of their patients. With that in mind, Wisconsinmedicalsociety.org offers patients a unique source for reliable, physician-reviewed medical information. The Wisconsin Medical Society, a trusted source for health policy leadership since 1841. Your Doctor. Your Health.

xxx