



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Fact Sheet

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Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) November 2014

Summary:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) developed the Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning Value (SAIL) Model to measure, evaluate and benchmark quality and efficiency at medical centers. The SAIL model highlights successful strategies of VA's top performing facilities in order to promote high quality, safety, and value-based health care across all of its medical centers.

SAIL is just one tool VA is using to improve health care as part of its [Blueprint for Excellence](#). The *Blueprint* outlines the steps VA, as an organization, will be taking to deliver care that focuses on what matters to Veterans - their health and well-being.

Fiscal Year 2014 SAIL Results:

[In the latest SAIL data release](#), 147 medical centers were assessed on 26 indicators. The results indicated 93 medical centers showed improvement in overall quality from the third quarter of fiscal year 2013 to the third quarter of fiscal year 2014.

Changes in medical center performance on individual indicators were mixed. The largest gains were seen in areas where there were VA-wide improvement initiatives, such as mortality, length of stay and hospital readmissions.

Currently, VA has 150 operating VA Medical Centers (VAMC). SAIL data includes the 128 VAMCs that provide acute inpatient medical and/or surgical care to Veteran patients.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What does SAIL measure and what is the methodology?

A: SAIL divides VA's 128 acute inpatient medical and/or surgical care VAMCs into four comparison groups based on VA standards for hospital complexity level and intensive care unit level. SAIL assesses 25 Quality measures in areas such as mortality, complications, and customer satisfaction, which are organized within eight domains. In addition, SAIL includes another measure to assess overall Efficiency (the Efficiency domain).

- SAIL draws data from existing measures prepared by VA Program Offices and VA national databases for inpatient and outpatient encounters and facility characteristics.
- The assessment of the relative performance of facilities takes several steps:
 - Facilities are first compared within their comparison group on individual Quality measures and assigned a score based on their relative performance.
 - Within each domain, the measure scores are multiplied by the assigned weight and then added together to become the domain score.
 - The domain scores are then used to calculate the Quality composite score.

Q: What makes SAIL different than other health care quality measurement tools?

A: As part of the largest integrated health care system in the United States, each VAMC is organized slightly differently to best serve our nation's Veterans health care needs, and SAIL is designed accordingly.

- SAIL's quality measurements take into account the complexity level of each Medical Center (e.g., patient volume, number of residents and complex clinical program, and research dollars) when comparing their relative performance.
- Unlike most other health industry report cards updated annually, SAIL is updated quarterly to allow medical centers to more closely monitor the quality and efficiency of the care delivered to our Veterans.

Q: What period of time does SAIL cover?

A: SAIL contains data from Fiscal Year 2010 to roughly one quarter before the current fiscal year quarter.

For more information on SAIL, please visit: <http://www.hospitalcompare.va.gov/>.