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## **Organization reviews health care report cards so you don't have to**

Tired of reading doctor report cards and not knowing which ones to believe? Now there's an organization that reviews the plethora of health care report cards available online in order to provide you with clear choices about the sites that really do provide accurate and useful information.

The Informed Patient Institute provides detailed analysis of online health report cards – covering nursing homes and physicians for now and other health areas in the future – to show consumers where they can find the best information.

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An independent, non-profit organization funded by foundations and individual donors, IPI provides guidance to other consumer-focused organizations, such as Consumers Union, to “facilitate access to credible online information about health care quality and patient safety,” but not by rating individual health facilities or professionals. Instead, IPI evaluates the usefulness of the wealth of online report cards and advocates making more -- and more useful -- health care quality information available to consumers.

Among the best features of IPI's system:

1. It uses a clear rating system. Organizations can receive an A through F grade, with explanations for what each means. IPI always tells you “what we like” and “what we don’t like.” For example, the New York State Health Department’s Nursing Home Profile received one of the few A grades. IPI praises the site for providing a “wide range of information including state survey results, complaints and quality of care provided,” but also notes that it doesn’t “have information on costs, nursing home staffing, or resident or family satisfaction with the home.”
2. It allows for exceptions to the rules. If a site has “unique content” but doesn’t quite make the grade in other criteria, IPI gives the site a “U.”
3. It simplifies users’ options. If you click on a state like Alabama, you will see that the only option for you to click is “Physicians” because there is no nursing home content related to Alabama. California, by contrast has sites that cover both. All the areas that IPI hopes to cover in the future are included in the drop-down menu, but only the topics that have content are clickable.
4. It provides good context. For each state, on the right side of the screen, you will see a Top 10 ranking of the sites IPI has reviewed that contain content about that state.

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Source: [Reportingonhealth.org](http://Reportingonhealth.org)

To visit the Informed Patient Institute web site, click [here](#).

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