

## CommonSpirit Health Elevates Quality Through Standardization and Systemwide Collaboration



CommonSpirit Health is one of the largest nonprofit health systems in the country. It serves patients in 24 states through its network of 159 hospitals and thousands of care sites. With a system this size CommonSpirit is laser-focused on consistency but mindful of the unique community each hospital serves. That's why leaders talk about "One CommonSpirit." The idea is simple. Every patient should get safe, high-quality care no matter where they live.

This is more than a slogan. It is a way of organizing care across the system. By standardizing processes and encouraging staff to share what works, CommonSpirit is seeing steady improvements in safety and outcomes. The approach has yielded better results for complex conditions and helped save lives in communities large and small.

## Turning Local Successes into Systemwide Wins

One strength of CommonSpirit is its ability to spread good ideas quickly. In the Pacific Northwest, hospitals began using artificial intelligence-enabled tools that flag cancer screenings before a patient visit. These tools notify providers of the cancer screenings that should be ordered prior to patient visits. Providers saw immediate results. Screening for colonoscopies and polypectomies increased dramatically. The technology is being rolled out across the country.



This process is used in other areas. Managing maternal hypertension is critically important for safe patient care, but there were no national benchmarks for this patient care process. So CommonSpirit built its own clinical care bundle with four specific evidence-based process measures. Leaders studied systemwide data, created clear internal benchmarks and shared solutions across hospitals. The result was safer care for mothers and babies, with measurable reductions in complications caused by hypertension and eclampsia.

## A Process That Works at Scale

Improving care in a large system takes structure. CommonSpirit relies on an eight-step process to move new priorities into practice across all hospitals. The steps include setting baselines, creating toolkits, sharing data and building accountability at every level.

This process has been applied to nearly 20 measures in just three years. It has lifted the system's performance from below the national median to the top third or better in a number of these metrics. In 2024, the approach was used to tackle heart failure mortality. The result was a 42% drop

## The 8-Step Process Cascading Changes Throughout the CommonSpirit System

1. Identify opportunities
2. Establish baselines and goals
3. Create/determine clinical governance
4. Engagement and accountability
5. Evidence-based strategies
6. Toolkits and resources
7. Performance improvement approach
8. Performance feedback

in the observed-to-expected mortality ratio. CommonSpirit is now in the 86th percentile nationally, saving an estimated additional 500 lives each year.

National clinical service-line leaders helped guide the eight-step process, but the work is shared widely. A national quality improvement collaborative of more than 1,000 participants focused on leveraging learning from experts and exchanging best practices. This fostered an environment for leading experts to collaborate and develop impact-driven solutions. Following the development of these processes, regional quality improvement groups took on the job of standardizing processes and making sure accountability stays in place. This structure helps keep everyone aligned, from the national level to the bedside.

## Using Data to Drive Improvement

Technology and data are also helping the system make progress. CommonSpirit is working toward a single electronic health record for all sites. Until that project is complete, leaders rely on a Clinical Quality Measure Repository. It pulls information from more than 40 sources and 17 different EHRs. Nearly 4,000 users across the organization can access it.

The repository makes performance data clear and comparable. A hospital quality director can see where their team stands. An executive can view trends across the system. Once the numbers are visible and normalized, teams begin to benchmark against each other. That sense of healthy competition has fueled even more improvement across the CommonSpirit system.

## One Mission, One Standard of Care

CommonSpirit leverages its size and its unity. Doctors, nurses and staff across 24 states are working under one mission and one standard of care. AI tools for cancer screening, new benchmarks for maternal care and best practices for heart failure are just a few examples.

By listening to staff, sharing ideas and building consistency, the system has created a culture where improvement is expected and supported. The journey toward “One CommonSpirit” shows how a large health system can use its scale to deliver safe, reliable and high-quality care for every patient it serves.