

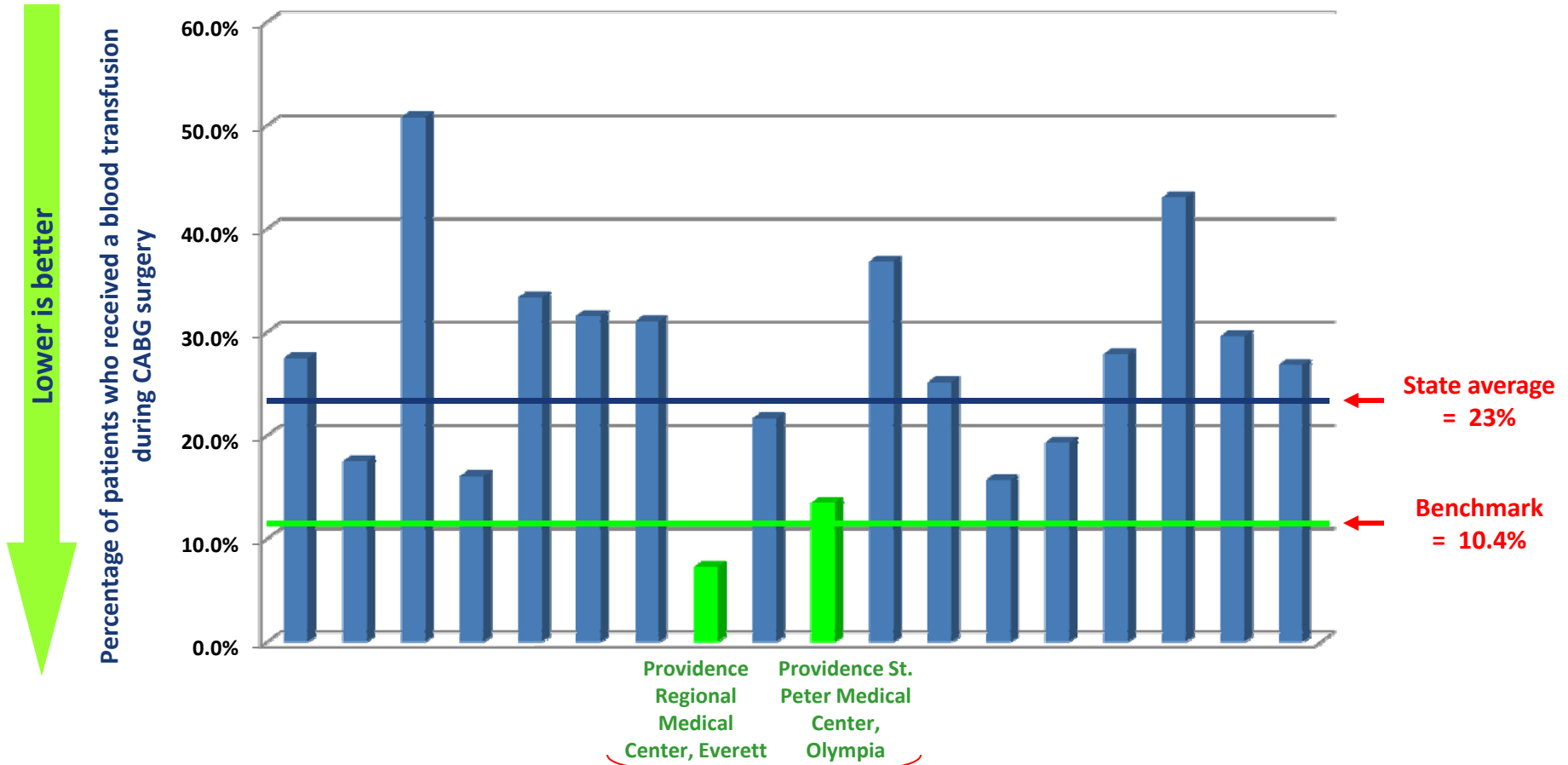


CLINICAL OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PROGRAM  
A PROGRAM OF THE FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH CARE QUALITY

## Blood Use in Cardiac Surgery: WA State “Average” vs. “Benchmark”

- In the past, blood transfusions were given almost routinely during and after heart surgery. Because blood transfusions are not without risk, and blood products (red blood cells and other parts of the blood) are often in short supply, costly, and may not always be necessary, doctors and researchers are taking a closer look at routine transfusions. Beginning in 1988, health care groups have created guidelines that recommend the least number of blood transfusions possible during surgery.
- Despite these recommendations, the use of blood products, including red blood cells and platelets, continues to vary considerably between hospitals, both nationally and in Washington. On average, 23% of patients at hospitals in Washington state will receive at least one blood transfusion as part of their bypass surgery. Some hospitals use less and others use more blood transfusions for routine care.
- Washington’s doctors have been working closely with COAP to better understand practice patterns for blood transfusion. While nearly all agree that fewer transfusions are preferred, not all agree on exactly when to give them. With help from COAP, surgeons and hospitals are working together to develop consistent approaches to blood transfusions. The goal is not to *eliminate* blood use, it is to work toward having a system in place that makes effective use of this resource while minimizing avoidable risks.
- Individual hospital results for Washington State in 2010 range from a low of 7.3% of patients receiving blood transfusions to a high of 50.8%. **Two hospitals in Washington have significantly lower blood use than the state average, and as such, have set what we call a “benchmark” for all hospitals to try to achieve. These top performing hospitals are highlighted on the following graph.**

# Red Blood Cell Use: Average vs. Benchmark (CABG Only)



These 2 hospitals are the top performing hospitals in the state for this particular measure.