

# Consumer Reports and STS Public Reporting

*STS National Database News, March 2012* -- There are now more than 400 Adult Cardiac Surgery Database participants who have voluntarily consented to be a part of STS Public Reporting Online, and 365 for the *Consumer Reports* public reporting initiative. Public reporting remains a top priority for the Society, and STS is striving for even stronger involvement among Database participants.

Last year, the Society and the Adult Cardiac Surgery Database were featured in an unprecedented 11-page feature article in the September issue of *Consumer Reports* magazine – one of the top-10-circulation magazines in the United States. The cover story, “The Business of Healing Hearts,” was the result of an exhaustive investigation by Consumer Reports to determine the state of cardiac care in America.

The STS/*Consumer Reports* collaboration seeks to better inform and educate consumers about their options in cardiac care. The September issue featured ratings for 323 surgical groups across the United States that perform heart bypass surgery, drawing upon the STS Adult Cardiac Surgery Database data. Participation in the *Consumer Reports* and the STS Public Reporting Online initiatives is strictly voluntary.

“Heart disease is particularly interesting to consumers, especially our audience, which is older, highly educated, and more male than female,” said John Santa, MD, MPH, Director of the Consumer Reports Health Ratings Center. “We know our readers are very interested in health care provider comparisons, and we knew that the heart surgeons have great data.”

STS Public Reporting Online, launched just one year ago, also continues to grow. When first launched, approximately one-fifth of Adult Cardiac Surgery Database participants voluntarily consented to be publicly reported. Today, that figure has grown to almost two-fifths of participants.

“When it comes to public reporting, cardiothoracic surgeons are at a distinct advantage, given our highly credible STS data and analytical methodologies,” said David M. Shahian, MD, Chair of the STS Workforce on National Databases. “Measurement, public reporting, transparency, and accountability are all integral parts of health care reform,” continued Dr. Shahian. “That is a trend that is only going to continue, and STS must continue to take a leadership role,” he concluded. STS’s public reporting initiative has been documented in a September 2011 Supplement of *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery*.

Separate consent forms are required to participate in each initiative and both the STS Public Reporting Online and the *Consumer Reports* websites are updated semi-annually.

Learn more about [STS Public Reporting Online](#). For more information and to get involved, contact Bianca Reyes, STS Manager of Database Development, at [breyes@sts.org](mailto:breyes@sts.org).