



Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Behavioral Health Care**.

You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital is measurably different ... for your health!

Visit us at www.LMHealth.org.

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department.

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Quality Report Card

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Warning Signs of Depression

According to the American Psychiatric Association, mental depression affects approximately 10 percent of adults every year. Sustained depression is never normal and produces needless suffering. Fortunately, the condition is treatable.

Common symptoms of depression include:

- Changes in appetite that result in unintentional weight loss or gain
- Insomnia or oversleeping
- Loss of energy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Difficulty with concentration or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Suicide attempts

If you are suffering from any of these symptoms, you should contact your physician or psychiatrist for evaluation. More information is available by calling Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services at (740) 348-4870.

Behavioral Health Care – How do we compare?

Check out our Quality Report Cards online at www.LMHealth.org.

At Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare them to benchmark measures. Then, we publish them so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your health care choices.

1 Behavioral health is a broad term that refers to psychiatric and/or chemical dependency illnesses. Inpatient hospitalization for either condition is often necessary for effective intervention. Licking Memorial Hospital provides a wide range of services for people with behavioral health illnesses at its Shepherd Hill facility. One goal is to transition patients into outpatient settings where they can continue treatment, decreasing the need for readmission.

	LMH 2007	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	Goal
Psychiatric readmissions	1.7%	0.5%	2.4%	less than 5.6%

2 Chemical dependency, also called addiction, is treated as a chronic, progressive and potentially fatal disease. Although Shepherd Hill staff members work with patients to develop individual treatment goals that will meet the patients' needs, the Shepherd Hill program is built around four consistent treatment goals: education, self-diagnosis, self-responsibility and self-treatment. Recovery is dependent upon completion of all goals, therefore, Shepherd Hill monitors when treatment is incomplete and why. When patients leave Shepherd Hill, staff members encourage continuity of care by referring them to other health care professionals as needed.

	LMH 2007	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	Goal
Patients with complete treatment	70%	79%	78%	greater than 75%

3 Outcome studies are conducted to monitor and measure the success of chemical dependence treatment. Our data shows how patients are doing up to two years after completing the program. Information regarding abstinence one year after completing the program is self-reported by patients.

	LMH 2007	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	Goal
Patients remaining abstinent	83%	83%	82%	greater than 85%
Improvement in quality of relationships	99%	91%	92%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall physical and mental health	98%	93%	91%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall quality of life	97%	97%	92%	greater than 85%

4 Detoxification – the safe, medically supervised elimination of addictive substances from the body – is the most intensive care offered for chemical dependency patients. Acute withdrawal symptoms are managed by the appropriate medications for each patient's situation. The length of stay for detoxification depends upon the drug of choice and the severity of the withdrawal.

	LMH 2007	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	Goal
Average length of stay – alcohol treatment	2.6	2.4	2.6	less than 3 days
Average length of stay – opiate treatment	2.8	2.7	2.6	less than 4 days
Average length of stay – tranquilizer treatment	3.2	2.8	3.4	less than 5 days

5 Medication education is considered an essential component of providing complete behavioral health care. A thorough understanding of the medication's purpose, side effects and expected response leads to decreased relapse and readmission rates and increased long-term compliance with medication on an outpatient basis.

	LMH 2007	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	Goal
Medication education provided for patients and/or family	99%	99%	99%	greater than 97%

6 Family participation is an important component in patients' recovery. For continuity of care, a licensed professional clinical counselor or a social worker will initiate contact with family members of Shepherd Hill psychiatric inpatients and encourage them to participate in a family meeting during the period of inpatient treatment.

	LMH 2007	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	Goal
Social work/family meeting during patient stay	74%	99%	97%	greater than 95%

7 Valproic acid and lithium are two common medications used to treat multiple behavioral health diagnoses. These medications can facilitate control of symptoms and assist in recovery, but both have potentially dangerous side effects. Licking Memorial Behavioral Health professionals monitor their patients’ blood at specified intervals to ensure therapeutic levels of the medications and to observe for toxicity or other negative effects on vital organs.

	LMHP 2007	LMHP 2008	LMHP 2009	Goal
Appropriate testing complete for patients taking valproic acid (Depakote)	74%	91%	97%	greater than 90%
Appropriate testing complete for patients taking lithium (Lithobid)	84%	94%	97%	greater than 90%

Patient Story – Peyton Jones, D.O.

Peyton Jones, D.O., (not his real name) was accustomed to excelling at pretty much everything he tried. In 2002, he was enrolled in medical school, studying to be a family medicine physician. He earned excellent grades and considered himself to be a serious student and overachiever. He enjoyed being in control of his life, which was on track toward a solid future.

Dr. Jones is now a practicing physician in northern Ohio, caring for patients in life-or-death situations. However, his success was nearly derailed when he developed a substance abuse disorder that began while he was in medical school, and continued until he received help from Shepherd Hill, a department of Licking Memorial Hospital.

“My problem started out as a combination of things,” Dr. Jones recalled. “Originally, I was a casual drinker and occasionally smoked marijuana. I was never really a person to go to parties – I often drank at home alone. It was more of a stress release for me than anything else, but it was a growing problem. Things escalated from there because I had no self-control on my marijuana use. I thought I could regulate my moods with chemicals, and I rationalized that since I was intelligent I would be able to control my use.”

Dr. Jones completed medical school, served an internship and residency, and began working as a family practice physician. He said, “I did not think I had a problem because I was still going to work every day. I have learned that one of the common traits among substance abusers is that they tend to keep the workplace ‘sacred,’ believing that if they can still perform at work, they do not have a real problem. Everything else in their lives can slide, but their work is the last area affected.”

However, Dr. Jones’ entire life, including his work, was being affected. On his days off, he began drinking in the morning, and remained intoxicated throughout the day. He often experienced “blackouts” where he would appear to be functioning, but could not remember events afterward. “One blackout spell lasted 36 hours, and I missed a day of work. That was the first time I thought I might have a problem. Then I started drinking even when I was on call. That is when I knew I might have a problem,” he said.

At the age of 29 years, Dr. Jones’ use of alcohol and drugs fortunately had not resulted in any harm to patients, but in 2007, his former wife recognized that he was dangerously close to disaster. She coaxed him to seek help at Shepherd Hill. “I was willing to go,” Dr. Jones said, “because I was

intoxicated. However, throughout the first couple of weeks, I thought it was a mistake, and I should not be there.”

The first day at Shepherd Hill, Dr. Jones was carefully monitored by an addiction medicine physician and treated with medications to ease him through the detoxification process. Withdrawal without medical supervision can cause symptoms that are serious or even deadly in severe cases of alcohol and drug addiction. The detoxification program at Shepherd Hill is designed to keep patients safe and comfortable as their bodies readjust to the absence of addictive chemicals.

Shepherd Hill Counselor JR Abrahamsen began to help Dr. Jones understand the disease of addiction. Dr. Jones explained, “The worst part of recovery was having to live with myself during the early stages. I kept thinking that if I could just get back to work, everything would be fine. But JR seemed to be able to read my mind. With his help, I learned that I am not a weak person. My brain processes chemicals differently than other people. The neurotransmitters in my brain got ‘hijacked’ and the drugs and alcohol became my top priority – even more important than food, clothing and shelter.”

In addition to JR’s counseling, Dr. Jones found a great deal of encouragement from Shepherd Hill’s Caduceus Group, a unique support group made up of health care professionals who have battled substance abuse disorders.

Dr. Jones stayed at Shepherd Hill for a total of three months. Throughout the final two months, he was encouraged to make frequent visits home. “That was a really good experience for me,” Dr. Jones said. “It allowed me to make a transition back to home, and I was able to make Alcoholics Anonymous® (AA) contacts in advance.”

Drugs and alcohol took a toll on Dr. Jones’ home life. He and his wife divorced, and his medical license was suspended for six months. Still, he realizes the consequences could have been much worse. “Fortunately, I never harmed a patient, never received a DUI, and never had any legal issues. I truly had a life-changing experience at Shepherd Hill,” he said. “It has changed my way of thinking about my patients, and it taught me how to ask for and receive help.”

Three years later, Dr. Jones is once again looking forward to a bright future. He is part of a busy emergency department at a hospital in northern Ohio, and finds that through his experience, he has a better understanding of his patients’ needs. Dr. Jones still attends AA meetings and travels to Newark for

the Caduceus Group meetings whenever he can. He has remained sober since his treatment at Shepherd Hill and receives drug testing twice each month as part of his medical license reinstatement. In addition, he is engaged to be married soon.

Shepherd Hill is the behavioral health department of Licking Memorial Hospital in Newark, specializing in the treatment of chemically-dependent adults. It offers unique continuous care from inpatient detoxification, day treatment, extended residential treatment, intensive outpatient treatment,

and aftercare. Family members are strongly encouraged to participate in the patient's recovery process. For more information about Shepherd Hill, call (740) 348-4870 or (800) 223-6410. More information is also available by visiting www.shepherdhill.net.

Depression Is More Than a Case of the Blues

Everyone feels sad, angry or melancholy at times. Those emotions are normal reactions to stressful situations. However, if those feelings persist for weeks at a time, they may indicate depression, a medical disorder that can be treated.

Depression can be caused by different factors, and in some cases, a single cause cannot be identified. In other cases, depression is linked to a chemical imbalance or a traumatic event, such as the death of a loved one, difficulty in a relationship, birth of a baby, loss of a job, or financial problems. Recently, so many people in the U.S. have suffered from depression after losing their jobs or encountering financial problems that a new phrase, "recession depression," has emerged.

Psychiatrist Michael M. Kassur, M.D., of Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services, has seen how the economy has affected patients in Licking County. "Losing one's job usually leads to financial hardship. I have seen people having to make drastic changes in their lifestyles, sometimes losing their homes and their sense of security and safety," he said. "This leads to feelings of worthlessness, depression, irritability and other symptoms. It affects one's relationships, thus increasing the sense of isolation, and the individual slowly falls into the abyss of hopelessness. Fortunately, there is help available."

Depression is a medical condition, just like diabetes or hypertension, and it can usually be successfully treated with antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications and counseling. "It is important to begin treatment early, as the outcome is better," Dr. Kassur explained. "Best results are achieved when cognitive behavioral therapy is combined with medications. It typically takes two to four weeks to achieve a full remission. Engaging in a regular exercise routine, avoiding unhealthy foods, and staying busy are also very helpful. I always tell my patients that depression is an illness that drives one to isolation and inactivity. Anything you can do to counteract that makes you play an active role in fighting it and helps restore your sense of control."

Depression is more common among women than men. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, this may be due to hormonal fluctuations in a woman's



Help is available for patients who suffer from depression. For an appointment with a psychiatrist or counselor, call Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services in Newark at (740) 348-4870, or in Pataskala at (740) 348-1930.

body. Women with depression are more likely to report feelings of sadness, worthlessness and guilt. In comparison, men with depression are more likely to report fatigue, irritability, apathy and problems with sleeping. Children and teenagers who are depressed may be clingy or irritable, and may fake an illness to avoid school.

Older adults may avoid seeking treatment for depression if they mistakenly believe that it is a normal part of aging. Depression is not normal at any age. It can sometimes be the result of medication or an underlying medical condition, such as heart disease. Older adults who have these problems usually respond well to treatment.

Some people may be reluctant to seek medical help for depression because they are having financial difficulty. Dr. Kassur explained there are resources available to assist uninsured patients. "Some pharmaceutical manufacturers offer patient assistance programs, and some pharmacies have low-cost generic prescriptions," he said. "We can help match patients with a program that will make the cost of treatment affordable to them. We want to ensure that anyone who is depressed is not discouraged from receiving treatment due to the additional stress of finding financial assistance. We also help patients find other services that are available to promote their recovery, such as nutritional counseling."

If you suspect that someone you know is depressed, it is important to have that person visit a physician for evaluation and possible medical treatment. You may also help by suggesting an enjoyable activity, and being ready to listen if your friend or loved one wants to talk. Never ignore any comments about suicide. If medical treatment does not appear to be helping the patient after two months, a follow-up visit to the physician is warranted to seek an alternate approach.

Licking Memorial Outpatient Psychiatric Services has two locations in Licking County – 200 Drive Messimer Drive in Newark, and One Healthy Place in Pataskala. The practice specializes in providing outpatient psychiatric care for adults, ages 18 years and older. Patients can talk with a psychiatrist or counselor by calling for an appointment at (740) 348-4870 in Newark, or (740) 348-1930 for the Pataskala office.