



Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street
Newark, OH 43055

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

You'll soon discover why

Licking Memorial Hospital is measurably different ... for your health!

Visit us at www.LMHealth.org

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Community Report Card

Licking Memorial Health Systems

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A Community Report on CHF Care

Health Tips

Symptoms of Chronic Heart Failure

The American Heart Association offers these warning signs of heart failure. It is important to talk to your physician if you experience any of these symptoms:

- Shortness of breath; the person may have difficulty breathing while lying flat
- Persistent coughing or wheezing
- Edema (build-up of fluid in body tissues)
- Tiredness, fatigue
- Lack of appetite
- Nausea
- Confusion, impaired thinking
- Increased heart rate, or palpitations

CHF Care – How do we compare?

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 This indicator measures the average number of days chronic heart failure (CHF) patients are hospitalized during each inpatient stay. Length of stay is one indicator a hospital should consider in determining if it is using resources for inpatient care appropriately. CHF average length of stay should be close to the benchmark.

	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	Benchmark
Average length of stay for CHF patients	3.2 Days	3.3 Days	3.1 Days	5.3 Days ⁽¹⁾

2 Inpatient mortality measures the percentage of inpatient deaths among all CHF patients admitted to Licking Memorial Hospital.

	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	Benchmark
CHF inpatient mortality	0.9%	2.2%	1.0%	3.2% ⁽¹⁾

3 The left ventricle is the chamber of the heart that pumps blood out of the heart and into the body. Measuring left ventricular function (LVF) helps determine how well a CHF patient's left ventricle is working.

	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	Benchmark
LVF assessment	95%	97%	96%	96% ⁽¹⁾

4 Medications beneficial to many CHF patients include angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, beta-blockers, and angiotensin-receptor blockers (ARBs). ACE inhibitors and ARBs have been shown to lower mortality and improve functional capacity and quality of life. Beta-blockers can reverse or prevent some of the health effects associated with heart failure. Patients treated with beta-blockers may see significant improvement in heart function after three months.

	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	Benchmark
CHF patients on ACE or ARB at discharge	91%	98%	91%	89% ⁽¹⁾
CHF patients on beta-blockers at discharge	96%	99%	99%	90% ⁽²⁾

5 It is vital that CHF patients be involved in their own care to reduce health complications and improve quality of life. They need to monitor their weight, limit their salt intake, and take their medications regularly. Health care providers need to give thorough discharge instructions to help these patients effectively manage their condition.

	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	LMH 2006	Benchmark
All discharge instructions given	85%	91%	95%	78% ⁽¹⁾

Data Footnotes:

(1) Comparative data from the MIDAS+ Clinical Comparative Database.

(2) Benchmark indicates LMH goal.

Patient story – Mary Watson

As Mary Watson's fingers fly over the keyboard computing tax formulas for clients, she finds satisfaction in knowing her rhythmic tapping on the keys is matched by the regular beating of her heart. Mary, who has been a tax consultant for 33 years, became the first patient to receive a cardiac biventricular device and a cardioverter-defibrillator in the new surgery facilities of the John & Mary Alford Pavilion at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH).



Mary Watson exercises at the Licking Memorial Wellness Center to improve her heart health.

Mary's family has a long history of cardiovascular disease. "My mother did not have it, but her brothers and sisters all died of heart attacks," she said, "and my father and brother both had strokes."

Mary, who is 74 years old, also had an earlier brush with a cardiac event several years ago. "I was in Columbus and had a mild heart attack. They took me into a Columbus hospital, and I had a stent inserted."

In 2007, Mary developed symptoms that concerned her LMH cardiologist, Debra Heldman, M.D. "I could not breathe," Mary remembered. "I had gotten to the point that between the parking lot and Dr. Heldman's office, I had to stop a couple of times just to rest and catch my breath."

Dr. Heldman recommended that Mary have two procedures performed as soon as possible: the insertion of a biventricular device and an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). "Dr. Heldman said that I needed to have it done soon because each year I waited would lower the chance of success. I told her, 'Okay, but let's get it done before January 4 when the tax season starts up again!'" Mary said.

On November 12, 2007, Mary became the first patient at LMH to receive the technologically-advanced device as Charles Noble II, M.D., performed the procedure. A biventricular device synchronizes the heart's muscle to maximize pumping action. The ICD component of the device will deliver a small electrical shock to the heart if

it detects a dangerous abnormal rhythm.

"I went into the Hospital, had the procedures, and stayed that night. Then I was released on the next day," Mary said in amazement. "I felt better almost right away. I could breathe! I could walk!"

In addition to preparing tax forms, Mary manages the accounting for the family business. She and her husband,

Nevil, have operated a mobile home transporting service since 1968, and their son, Kevin, has worked alongside them since he was 16 years old. Mary and Nevil also have a daughter, Michele. Both children were born at Newark Hospital on Everett Avenue, which was the predecessor to the modern day LMH.

These days, Mary is adjusting to the results of her cardiac procedures. "There is this funny lump about the size of a walnut," she chuckled, referring to the device location on her chest. But she takes pride in the major improvement she has noticed. Thanks to her renewed energy, Mary no longer has to rest on short walks through parking lots. She is now a regular participant of the LMH Cardiac Rehabilitation program and exercises at the LMH Wellness Center twice a week for an hour at a time.

Living with Chronic Heart Failure

The American Heart Association estimates that over 5 million Americans are living with chronic heart failure (CHF), and more than one-half million new cases are diagnosed each year. It is unknown actually how many more Americans are at increased risk for heart failure and have not yet developed symptoms or been diagnosed.

Heart failure is diagnosed when the heart is unable to pump the body's blood as well as it should. Patients may often present with new complaints of shortness of breath or tiredness with activities. Although heart failure can be a serious, long-term condition, there are treatments available and patients can often live long, fulfilling lives.

Director of Cardiology Patty Merrick, C.N.P., is on the front line of cardiac care at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH). She offers patients a three-pronged approach that includes education, treatment and encouragement. "The first thing we have to do with newly-diagnosed patients is to help them understand that heart failure is a chronic condition, but it is treatable. Ten years ago, life expectancy was pretty grim with 20 percent of diagnosed patients dying within the first year. We know more about the treatment of heart failure now and can recommend multiple treatment options for our patients," Patty said.

"Know the common symptoms of heart failure," Patty continued. "Each day, be aware of your symptoms, and call your health care provider if your symptoms change or worsen. Four things you can do to stay healthy and stay out of the hospital include adopting a low sodium diet, exercising, making lifestyle changes and taking prescribed medication. Compliance is key. Talk to your doctor or health care provider. He/she can help you decide on what lifestyle changes you need to make and help you create a plan that will work for you."

Through the heart failure clinic at the hospital, LMH provides step-by-step instructions and guidance for heart failure patients. "We always prescribe optimal medical therapy," explained Cardiologist Bryce Morrice, M.D, who specializes in treating patients with heart failure. "New devices are then added as appropriate. Beginning in October 2007, we started offering implantable



LMH Cardiology nurse Lorie Phillips, R.N., counsels a patient about chronic heart failure.

cardiac defibrillators (ICDs) as well as newer treatment options with advanced biventricular pacing. Dr. Charles Noble, an electrophysiology specialist is performing the procedures at LMH."

"We also offer heart failure patients a great deal of encouragement," Patty said. "When people hear the term 'heart failure,' they often think that means their heart is worn out and ready to stop. Heart failure actually means the heart function

is reduced. The patients may develop shortness of breath and tire more easily. We can work with the patients to improve their endurance and encourage them to play an active role in their treatment."

More information on heart failure is available on the American Heart Association Web site at www.Americanheart.org or the American Association of Heart Failure Nurses Web site at www.aahfn.org.