



**Licking Memorial
Health Systems**

1320 West Main Street
Newark, OH 43055

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Columbus, Ohio
Permit No. 8757

Please take a few minutes to read this month's

Report on **Stroke Care.**

You'll soon discover why

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

Visit us at www.LMHealth.org

A publication of the LMHS Public
Relations Department at (740) 348-1572.

Please contact the Public Relations
Department to receive future mailings.




Community Report Card
Licking Memorial Health Systems
(740) 348-4000 (phone) • www.LMHealth.org

Volume 7, Number 7 July 2006

Stroke Care ...

a community report on patient care quality.

What Increases Your Risk?

Risk Factors You Cannot Change:

- Age – the risk for stroke increases with age
- Race – African Americans and Hispanics have higher risk than those of other races
- Gender – stroke is more common in men than women, until age 75, when women have more strokes
- Family History – the risk for stroke is greater if a parent, brother or sister has had a stroke

Risk Factors You Can Control:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Coronary artery disease
- Smoking
- Physical inactivity
- Obesity
- Heavy use of alcohol
- Use of cocaine or other street drugs

Stroke 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 A person who has symptoms of a stroke needs to seek emergency medical care immediately. A thrombolytic, or “clot-busting,” drug must be given within three hours after the initial onset of symptoms. To determine if a patient is a candidate for a thrombolytic drug, it is vital that a CT scan be performed before the drug is given.

	LMH 2003	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	Goal ⁽¹⁾
Median time from door to doctor	16 minutes	18 minutes	28 minutes	less than 10 minutes
Median time from door to CT scan	50 minutes	60 minutes	81 minutes	less than 25 minutes
Median time from door to drug	84 minutes	66 minutes	81 minutes	less than 60 minutes

2 Since a stroke can affect a person’s ability to swallow, stroke patients should receive a swallowing evaluation to make sure they can swallow well enough to eat or take medication by mouth.

	LMH 2003	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	Benchmark ⁽²⁾
% Stroke patients received a swallowing evaluation before eating	80%	74%	83%	65%

3 Beginning rehabilitation as soon as it can be done safely can help improve recovery for stroke patients. Rehabilitation may include physical therapy, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy.

	LMH 2003	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	Goal
% Received appropriate therapy	91%	99%	88%	100%

4 An elevated serum lipid level has been a well-documented risk factor for coronary artery disease. The reduction of LDL cholesterol through lifestyle modification and during therapy for the prevention of strokes and other vascular events is recommended for patients with coronary artery disease.

	LMH 2005	Benchmark ⁽²⁾
% Coronary artery disease patients receiveing lipid profile during visit ⁽³⁾	77%	62%

5 Evidence-based medicine supports giving a blood-thinning medication (such as aspirin) by the second day of hospitalization after a stroke and ordering the medication at discharge. Blood-thinning medication prevents clots from forming and improves blood flow.

	LMH 2003	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	Benchmark ⁽²⁾
% Eligible patients receiving blood-thinning medication	96%	100%	97%	93%
% Patients taking blood-thinning medication at discharge	99%	96%	99%	91%

6 Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) physicians use evidence-based measures in order to provide excellent, quality care to patients. The American Stroke Association and American Heart Association recommend the use of blood-thinning medication in order to prevent clots from forming and to improve blood flow.

% LMHP coronary artery disease patients seen receiving blood-thinning medication	LMHP 2004	LMHP 2005	Goal
	98%	98%	greater than 80%

7 It is often beneficial for a stroke patient to have a consultation with a neurologist to confirm the diagnosis because many other diseases can mimic a stroke. Neurologists have unique training and experience in neurological diseases and can offer stroke patients comprehensive care that is tailored to their specific needs.

% Stroke patients received a neurology consult	LMH 2003	LMH 2004	LMH 2005	Goal
	95%	93%	91%	greater than 90%

Data Footnotes:

- (1) Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement. *Diagnosis and initial treatment of ischemic stroke; 2003 October 6, p.5.*
- (2) Most recent benchmark from VHA Central Key Clinical Indicator Project.
- (3) LMH began collecting this data element in 2005.

Stroke Care Patient Feature – Ralph Heimerl

On May 9, 2005, Ralph Heimerl was watering his garden when he began experiencing a painful twitch in his arm. Other symptoms of a stroke may include: loss of vision, loss of speech or difficulty talking or understanding what others are saying, sudden or severe headache, or loss of balance or unstable walking. If any of these symptoms come on suddenly, it is a possible sign of a stroke and immediate medical attention is needed.

“I immediately knew what was wrong, but I wasn’t going to do anything,” said Ralph. Once his mother saw the condition that he was in, she called the ambulance. The Hebron emergency squad transported Ralph to the Emergency Department of Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH). “They were able to get me to the Hospital in time to receive the clot-busting drug,” said Ralph. “Immediate medical attention can make all the difference to someone showing signs of a stroke,” said Rhonda Maddern, R.N., Director of Acute Care Nursing Service. Upon arriving at LMH, Ralph was quickly assessed in the Emergency Department. Within three

hours, he was given tPA (tissue plasminogen activator). “Research has shown that when patients, who are eligible, are given a clot-busting drug, like tPA, they can have significant improvement of symptoms,” said Rhonda. “But time is crucial with tPA; the drug should be given within three hours of the first signs of stroke.” TPA drugs can significantly reduce a stroke’s side effects, which include permanent disability. Ralph spent one week in the

Hospital. “The care that I received there was very good – they bent over backwards to help me,” said Ralph. While in the Hospital, the Licking Memorial Hospitalists caring for Ralph also discovered that he had a heart arrhythmia, for which he began seeking additional treatment upon his release. “In a way, it was good that I was there, not that having a stroke was good, but to find the arrhythmia,” said Ralph.



After suffering from a stroke a little more than a year ago, Ralph Heimerl is back to his favorite hobby – gardening.

Since having his stroke, Ralph began visiting the Anticoagulation Clinic monthly and has follow-up blood work completed every three months. The

Stroke Care Patient Feature – Ralph Heimerl (continued from previous page)

Anticoagulation Clinic carefully monitors some blood thinning medications – such as Warfarin (Coumadin®) Lovenox® or Heparin® – because of possible serious risks associated with certain health conditions, such as stroke, arterial fibrillation and deep vein thrombosis, as well as the medication itself. He also has regular check-ups with his primary care physician, Megan Miller, D.O., of Licking Memorial Family Practice – Hebron. “The staff and Dr. Miller are excellent. They answer any questions and always help,” continued Ralph.

The only side effect that Ralph suffered from his stroke was fatigue. Gardening and yard work are some of Ralph’s favorite hobbies. “I can’t get out there and work in my garden all day like I used to. But, I still enjoy working out there while I can,” said Ralph.

Hospital and Primary Care Physicians Working Together to Serve Patients



Megan Miller,
D.O.

To provide better care for both our office patients and our hospitalized patients, physicians who make up the Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) partner with Licking Memorial Hospitalists to provide care for our patients in the Hospital. Hospitalists are internists who specialize in caring for acutely ill hospitalized patients, and they are stationed in Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) so they can respond to patient needs rapidly. If you are admitted to LMH, our hospitalists will care for you, consulting other specialists if and when needed.

If an LMHP primary care physician needs to admit a patient to the Hospital, he/she would utilize the hospitalist service to care for the patient. “The benefit of the hospitalist service is that they are able to care for the patients 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Megan Miller, D.O., physician with Licking Memorial Family Practice – Hebron. If a patient is seen in the physician office and admission is warranted (on a non-emergent basis), hospitalists are contacted. The primary care physician will then arrange for a direct admission, and the patient is evaluated by the hospitalist upon arrival at LMH. “Whenever a patient is admitted, Hospital labs and important admission information will automatically appear on the electronic health record in my office,” said Dr. Miller.

Through electronic medical records, the hospitalists and the primary care physician can exchange information about the care of the patient instantaneously. “I immediately know the patient was admitted as the information is transferred electronically to me in real time. When discharged, the patient is given an appointment to follow up with me. The hospitalist physician calls and gives me a verbal summary of the admission and any issues I need to address once the patient is out of the Hospital.” said Dr.

Miller. Primary care physicians also receive a faxed copy of the discharge instructions for the patient. So, when the patient follows up at the recommended time, the physician is fully aware of the current plan and is able to continue care at that point.

This close partnership – both with the Hospitalists and primary care physician – helps us to provide more efficient, comprehensive health care for all of our patient