



## Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street  
Newark, Ohio 43055

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

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

Visit us at [www.LMHealth.org](http://www.LMHealth.org).

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# Quality Report Card

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## Health Tips – Act FAST for Stroke

The National Stroke Association urges you to learn the warning signs of stroke, and “Act FAST” by calling 9-1-1 immediately if any of the following symptoms are present:

**Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

**Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

**Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

**Time:** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

# Stroke Care – How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), 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 healthcare choices.

Check out  
our Quality  
Report Cards online  
at [www.LMHealth.org](http://www.LMHealth.org).

**1** A person who has symptoms of a stroke needs to seek medical attention immediately. Special “clot-busting” medications may be used to treat a stroke if administered soon after the onset of symptoms. Clot-busters are high-risk medications and can have significant side effects, so a complete evaluation is necessary before a patient can be determined to be a candidate for them.

Although the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association recommendations have expanded to allow for clot-busting medications to be used up to 4.5 hours after the onset of stroke symptoms, the drugs are most effective when given within three hours after symptoms first appear. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) tracks the percentage of patients who were appropriate candidates for clot-busters and received them within three hours of the time their symptoms began.

	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Received drug within three hours of time last known to be well	N/A	67%	91%	57%

**2** Patients who suffer a stroke may be at risk for repeat strokes in the future. It is important that while patients are hospitalized, they receive education about reducing their risk and responding to another stroke in the future. This indicator shows the percentage of patients who had this education recorded in their records as being completed.

	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Stroke education	N/A	73%	90%	72%

**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 2008	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Patients evaluated for rehabilitation services	91%	92%	88%	95%

**4** Evidence-based medicine supports quality by 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. While nearly all LMH medical patients are evaluated upon admission for the risk of developing a blood clot, called a venous thromboembolism (VTE), in some cases the use of drugs or mechanical devices, may not be appropriate. It is important to document the reason that the use of either drugs or mechanical devices is contraindicated.

	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Eligible patients receiving blood-thinning medication	97%	99%	97%	97%
Patients with blood-thinning medication at discharge	98%	99%	99%	98%
Patients with VTE prophylaxis by second day	85%	86%	90%	87%

**5** Patients with atrial fibrillation are at higher risk for suffering strokes. Due to an inefficient heartbeat, blood clots can form in the heart and then travel to the brain, leading to stroke. These patients should receive long-term blood-thinning medication to help prevent these clots from forming. LMH tracks the percentage of patients with atrial fibrillation who were discharged on a blood-thinner, as appropriate.

Another significant cause of strokes can be from high cholesterol levels. Stroke patients with high cholesterol should receive cholesterol-lowering medications (called statins) to take after discharge to help lower the risk for more strokes. LMH tracks the percentage of stroke patients with high cholesterol who were receiving statins at discharge.

	LMH 2008	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	National <sup>(1)</sup>
Atrial fibrillation patients on anticoagulation therapy	84%	93%	100%	93%
Patients with statin medication	78%	93%	91%	89%

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Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) office-based 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. It is also recommended to have an annual LDL cholesterol test.

	LMHP 2008	LMHP 2009	LMHP 2010	National <sup>(2)</sup>	Goal
LMHP coronary artery disease patients seen, and are receiving blood-thinning medication	95%	90%	92%	greater than 80%	greater than 90%
LMHP coronary artery disease patients seen who have had an annual LDL test	92%	87%	91%	greater than 80%	greater than 90%

**Data Footnotes:** (1) Comparative data from the Midas Comparative Database. (2) American Heart Association/American Stroke Association/National Committee for Quality Assurance Heart/Stroke Recognition Program.

## Patient Story – Petey Wiemer

Jetta (Petey) Wiemer of Heath wants to discourage others from following her example. In November 2010, Petey began to have stroke symptoms, but she waited for two days before she sought help at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH). Petey survived the potentially fatal event with relatively minor permanent damage, but she knows her delay could have resulted in major disability, or even death. Fortunately, Petey used the experience to make positive changes for her health, and she now feels better than she has in years.



Petey Wiemer has received loving support from her four daughters as she recovers from a stroke. Pictured are (left to right): Kelly Lewis, Katie Good, Petey Wiemer, Misty Lowry and Bev Carmichael.

“I did not want to face the fact that I was having a stroke,” Petey said. “It happened on Friday, and I went to the Hospital on Sunday. I would not let my daughters take me to the Hospital before that because I was scared.”

After living in the Columbus area for many years, Petey moved back to Newark in 2010 after Jim, her husband of 33 years, passed away. Although she was now living closer to her four grown daughters and enjoyed her nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren, Petey missed Jim very much and needed something to occupy her time. She took a part-time job at JC Penney at the Indian Mound Mall to help fill the void.

“I had been working the day after Thanksgiving, known as Black Friday, which is the busiest shopping day of the year,” Petey remembered. “It was a long day, and the stroke hit me that night around 11:00 p.m. My right side had the weirdest feeling. My right leg would not move like it should. It was a scary, scary thing.”

Petey now knows that what she should have done was to call 9-1-1 immediately to seek help. Instead, she initially kept her problem a secret. When she finally confided in her daughters a couple of days later, they insisted that she go to the Hospital. “I had a fear of the unknown. I was afraid of having the doctors tell me I had a stroke, and the tests that might follow. But after I did finally go to the Hospital,

they did such a good job of explaining what was happening to me that it calmed my fears, and the CT scan was completely painless. My girls were able to be with me at all times. I encourage anyone who may be having a stroke to go to the Hospital right way to get the help they need.”

Terrill Burnworth, D.O., one of the LMH Emergency physicians who treated Petey, stated that quick medical response to a stroke can make a world of difference in a patient’s outcome. “We are glad that Petey has recovered so well, but she took a big risk by waiting so long,” Dr. Burnworth stated. “Many times, if we can diagnose a stroke within three hours of the onset of symptoms, we can administer thrombolytic “clot-busting” drugs to stop the stroke and prevent additional irreversible damage.”

Petey was admitted to LMH and received further care under the medical staff’s supervision. During that time, she was placed on medications to control her newly discovered high blood pressure and high cholesterol levels. The physicians also recommended that she find a way to conquer her two-packs-a-day cigarette habit.

*Patient Story - Petey Wiemer (continued on next page)*

“They told me that if I continued to smoke I could possibly have another stroke. Patty Wicks, a tobacco cessation counselor, came to my room to ask me if I was interested in stopping, and she told me about the Quit for Your Health program at LMH. Even before I left the Hospital, Patty brought me nicotine lozenges and patches.”

Petey has not had a cigarette since the November evening that she had the stroke. “It is amazing to me. I did not know if I was strong enough to quit,” she said. “I had truly enjoyed smoking for 62 years. After every breakfast, lunch and dinner, I had coffee and a cigarette. But I had made up my mind, and Patty helped me every way she could. The Quit for Your Health program also provided me with nicotine gum and counseling sessions – all free of charge. I tell everyone how good I feel now. Breathing was never a problem for me before, but I was surprised by how much more easily I breathe now that I have quit smoking.”

At 79 years of age, Petey has made other positive changes that have improved her health and well-being. She regularly visits her family physician, Richard Donnard, D.O., to monitor her blood pressure and cholesterol levels. She has cut back on junk food and consumes more fruits and vegetables. In addition, she meets with her daughters every day for a healthful walk.

When Petey was discharged from LMH, she used a walker, but after several months’ therapy, she can walk without assistance. Some tingling remains in her right side, but she reports that function in her leg continues to improve. Petey is grateful that her faith and a positive outlook helped her through the crisis, and she now plans to apply her improved health toward exploring the interesting senior programs that Licking County has to offer.

## Take a Brisk Walk to Lower Your Risk of Stroke

In Licking County, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death, according to a report published by the Ohio Department of Health in 2008. On average, from 2004 to 2006 (the most recent data available), one Licking County resident died from stroke approximately every 5.2 days. In addition, many more residents survived strokes, often with disabling consequences.

People of any age can have a stroke, although the risk increases with advancing age. Other uncontrollable stroke risk factors include:

- Gender
- Race
- Family and personal history of stroke
- Fibromuscular dysplasia
- Patent foramen ovale (hole in the heart)

However, there are other risk factors that can be controlled, including:

- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol or tobacco use
- Obesity
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Atrial fibrillation
- Diabetes
- Atherosclerosis and other circulation problems



Walking is an excellent form of exercise to reduce your risk of stroke and many other health problems.

For nearly all of the controllable risk factors, moderate activity can help to lower risk for stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises that moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking, is safe and beneficial. According to the CDC, 150 minutes of walking each week can lower a person’s risk for heart disease and stroke. Anyone who has been inactive or has a pre-existing medical condition, such as diabetes or heart disease, should check with their physician before beginning an exercise routine.

“Many people think they cannot spare 20 or 30 minutes each day for exercise,” commented Craig Cairns, M.D., Vice President Medical Affairs at Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS). “Perhaps they could begin with 5 or 10 minutes of brisk walking each day. A little bit of regular exercise is better than nothing at all. Hopefully, they will find a way to fit more exercise into their busy schedules when they begin to see the benefits.”

The public is invited to join LMHS in the “For Your Health” 5K Run and Fun Walk at Dawes Arboretum on Saturday, August 6. There is no registration fee for those who choose to walk the optional 1-mile course. For more information or to register, please call (740) 348-4108.