



Licking Memorial  
Health Systems

# Taking Quality To Heart

...a community report on patient care quality



April, 2001 ~ Vol. 2, No. 4

Take a few minutes to read this month's quality report.  
You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital has been named  
one of the nation's 100 Top Hospitals for three consecutive years.

## Respiratory Care... How do we compare?

Respiratory problems are the fifth most common reason for admission to Licking Memorial Hospital. In 2000 alone, there were over 300 admissions due to respiratory-related illnesses.

For the past five years, Licking Memorial Hospital has been using a comprehensive respiratory care protocol based upon standards established in the health care industry by the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. By using a proven protocol, LMH ensures consistency and effectiveness in the treatment of its respiratory patients.

**1. An essential factor in providing appropriate care to respiratory patients is conducting a consistent and thorough assessment of their condition.**

	LMH 1999 <sup>1</sup>	LMH 2000 <sup>1</sup>
% of symptomatic inpatients receiving respiratory assessments	100%	100%

**2. In order to initiate prompt and appropriate care, patient assessments need to be completed in a timely manner. To this end, LMH raised its standard of care by reducing the time in which respiratory assessments must be completed from within 24 hours to within 8 hours of hospital admission.**

	LMH 1999 Goal	Published Avg.	LMH 1999 <sup>2</sup>
% of respiratory assessments conducted within 24 hours	100%	N/A	94%
	LMH 2000 Goal	Published Avg. <sup>3</sup>	LMH 2000 <sup>4</sup>
% of respiratory assessments conducted within 8 hours	100%	86.1%	94%

**3. Asthma is one of the most common forms of respiratory illness, affecting an estimated 15 million Americans. The number of asthmatics requiring emergency hospitalization can indicate how well asthma is managed in the community.**

	Goal <sup>5</sup>	LMH 1998	LMH 1999	LMH 2000
% of Emergency Department asthma patients who are admitted	20% or less	7.0%	10.5%	12.1%

**Quality Note:** In 2000, LMH saw 466 asthmatics in its Emergency Department, representing 1.0% of total Emergency Department visits (46,760).

**4. When a patient is suspected of having respiratory failure, an Arterial Blood Gas (ABG) test is performed to see how well the lungs are functioning. The test primarily measures how well the body is taking in oxygen and ridding itself of carbon dioxide.**

	LMH Goal	LMH Current Avg. <sup>6</sup>
Turn-around times for emergency ABGs	Within 20 minutes	12 minutes

**5. The LMH Sleep Laboratory provides overnight and daytime sleep studies for various sleep-related breathing disorders. The volume of people being referred for sleep studies has grown over the years as education about sleep disorders has increased.**

	LMH 1999	LMH 2000	LMH 2001 <sup>7</sup>
# of sleep studies performed	331	463	664
% increase from previous year		39.9%	43.4%

**6. Sleep apnea is a common sleep disorder characterized by brief interruptions of breathing during sleep<sup>8</sup>. In Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA), breathing stops because the airway collapses and prevents air from getting into the lungs. When this occurs, sleep patterns are disrupted, and the oxygen level in the blood decreases. In severe cases, this condition can be life threatening and can lead to high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, and fatigue-related motor vehicle and work accidents.**

	LMH <sup>9</sup>	National <sup>10</sup>
% of patients seen who were diagnosed with sleep apnea	89.4%	46%

**Quality Note:** For OSA, the use of a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure machine (CPAP) is the most common treatment. A CPAP is a small, quiet machine that provides a gentle flow of air pressure through a small mask. Of those patients who were diagnosed with sleep apnea at LMH, 26% were treated with a CPAP<sup>9</sup>.

1 LMH patient data for 1999 and 2000, respectively. 1999 data reflects 685 patients and 2000 data represents 1398 patients.  
2 Began measuring in October of 1999. Based on LMH patient data for first quarter of 2000.  
3 Respiratory Care, May, 1999, Vol. 44, No. 5. Data based on Cleveland Clinic Foundation random quarterly audit from March 1996 through March 1998.  
4 Changed standard in May of 2000. Based on LMH patient data from May to December of 2000.  
5 Standard established by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield as part of a national study.  
6 Based on LMH patient data from 2000.  
7 Based on a projection from LMH patient data for first quarter of 2001.  
8 American Sleep Apnea Association.  
9 Based on LMH patient data from fourth quarter 2000 and first quarter 2001.  
10 National Sleep Foundation's 2000 Omnibus Sleep in America Poll.

## SUCCESS STORY

### Sleeping Soundly...

Jim Guinta couldn't get a good night's sleep, and it wasn't due to noisy neighbors or too much caffeine.

Like many restless sleepers, Jim suffers from sleep apnea, a condition which causes a person to stop breathing while asleep. People with sleep apnea wake up many times during the night as their bodies respond to this interruption of breathing. Without a good night's sleep, people with sleep apnea feel exhausted almost all of the time.

While Jim's energy level had reached an all-time low, it was a trip to the ocean that persuaded him to seek help.

"I had always enjoyed walking the beach, but on this trip, I couldn't even walk 75 yards. I was just so tired," he recalled. "Then, on the drive home, I fell asleep waiting on a traffic light. That was the last straw."

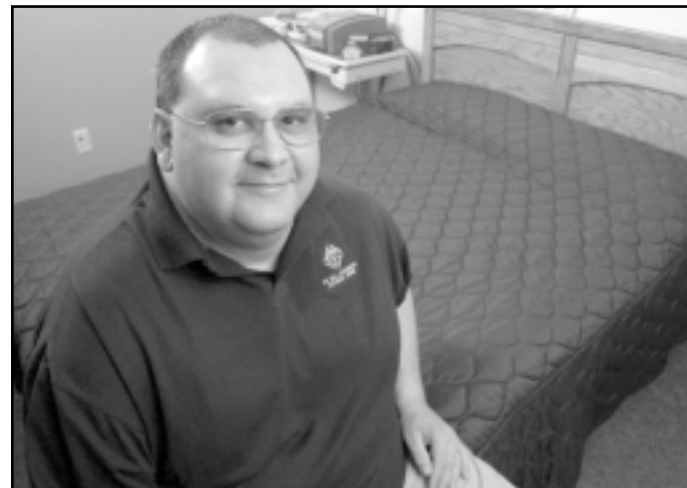
Jim decided to visit the Licking Memorial Sleep Lab where patients spend the night to have their sleep patterns monitored. "I woke up 47 times in a two-hour time period," he recounted. "A video of that night showed that I continually kicked and turned over like a fish out of water."

After the first two hours of observation, Jim was hooked up to a positive air pressure machine called a Bi-PAP unit. The Bi-PAP machine, similar to the CPAP machine, delivers air pressure that assists the patient when breathing in and breathing out. Jim slept five hours without any interruptions after being hooked up to the Bi-PAP machine.

"It was the best sleep that I have had in years. I woke up feeling like a new person. It was amazing."

With a home Bi-PAP machine, Jim now sleeps an average of seven hours a night. He reportedly has a lot more energy, which has led to a weight loss of 92 pounds since August.

"I have a more positive outlook on life now," said the 42-year-old.



Jim Guinta shown in the LMH Sleep Lab.

**"I always felt exhausted and had gained a lot of weight."  
- Jim Guinta**

### Are You Sleepy?

If you or someone you know snores regularly and has one or more of the following symptoms, it may be a sign of Obstructive Sleep Apnea:

- Snoring, interrupted by pauses in breathing
- Gasping or choking during sleep
- Restless sleep
- Excessive sleepiness or fatigue during the day
- Poor judgment or concentration
- Irritability
- Memory loss
- High blood pressure
- Depression
- Obesity (increased risk because of the excessive fatty tissue that surrounds the airway)

- Large neck size (larger than 17" in men; 16" in women)
- Crowded airway
- Morning headache
- Sexual dysfunction
- Frequent urination at night

Licking Memorial Hospital offers overnight sleep studies for those who suspect they may have sleep apnea. The studies are conducted at the hospital's sleep lab, which is overseen by medical specialists in the field. LMH doubled the size of its lab in January (from two to four beds) in order to accommodate the growing number of requested studies. On average, the lab sees 50 patients a month.

Sleep apnea is treatable. If you think you may have sleep apnea, contact your physician. You may benefit from a sleep study.

### Fast Facts

- There were 85,546 respiratory procedures performed at LMH in 2000.
- There were 1,511 visits to Pulmonary Rehabilitation last year. This monitored exercise program helps those with a chronic respiratory condition keep their lungs and heart in optimal condition.
- LMH Community Case Management has a full-time respiratory case manager dedicated to the treatment of respiratory patients in the community. In 2000, the respiratory case manager saw 42 patients in the asthma clinic.

### Campers Take Time to Catch Their Breath

Each June, area kids age 7 through 14 go camping with health professionals from Licking Memorial Hospital. While these kids may not learn how to use a canoe or braid leather wristbands, the skills they do acquire are invaluable to them.

Camp Feelin' Fine is a one day, free program that teaches kids with asthma how to stay active in spite of their condition. Taught by respiratory therapists, nurses and a pediatrician, the camp activities cover asthma triggers, management techniques and stress reduction.

This year's camp will be held June 15 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Infirmary Mound Park and will mix learning with nature hikes, games and a cook-out lunch.

Best of all, kids have the opportunity to meet others their age who live with asthma.

To apply for Camp Feelin' Fine, call 348-4YOU (4968). The deadline for registration is June 8.

Visit [www.lmhealth.org](http://www.lmhealth.org) to review other LMHS quality report cards. Also, if you have a suggestion on how we can improve our care, please call our Performance Improvement Line, 348-4641.