



Licking Memorial Health Systems

May, 2000 • Vol. 1, No. 4

Taking Quality To Heart... a community report on patient care quality

At Licking Memorial Hospital, we take pride in the care we provide. And we want you to know why. Each month we're producing a community report card. In this report, we'll give you a more in depth look at our services, share care experiences and health advice, and show you how our quality indicators compare to industry standards.

You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital has made the nation's 100 Top Hospitals list for two consecutive years.

Respiratory Care How do we compare?

There has been great movement in healthcare organizations toward the development and attainment of quality standards for medical care in the United States. Seemingly, the greatest progress has been made in Heart Care (LMH report published in the February 13, 2000 Advocate.). However, progress has been more gradual in quality measurement for respiratory care, making national standards more difficult to obtain.

1. The use of respiratory care protocols in hospitals has been steadily increasing over the last decade, reports Respiratory Care magazine.¹ In 1995, the American Association for Respiratory Care conducted a study of 1,892 U.S. hospitals to determine how many were using standard protocols for respiratory care:

- 40% of responding hospitals used respiratory care protocols.
- 18% were in the process of developing protocols.
- 24% were considering their use.

While less than half were using respiratory care protocols in 1995, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation had initiated their standards for respiratory therapy in 1992. In 1996, Licking Memorial Hospital adopted a comprehensive respiratory care protocol based on the Cleveland Clinic Foundation's. By using a proven-effective protocol, LMH ensures consistency and effectiveness in the treatment of its respiratory patients.

2. An important part of the respiratory care protocol is to have a structured patient assessment to ensure patients are evaluated consistently and thoroughly.¹

Licking Memorial Hospital uses a structured patient evaluation system established by the Cleveland Clinic Foundation to ensure consistency and thoroughness in patient assessments.

	LMH Goal	LMH 1999 Data
% of symptomatic inpatients in 1999 (685) who received respiratory assessments	100%	100%

3. Respiratory assessments should be performed in a timely manner. Licking Memorial strives to conduct respiratory assessments on inpatients within 24 hours of admission.

	LMH Goal	LMH Current Avg. ²
Respiratory assessments conducted w/in 24 hours	100%	94%

4. 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 a hospital manages asthma within its community.

	Goal ³	LMH 1998 Data ⁴
% of Emergency Dept. asthma patients who are admitted ⁵	20% or less	7%

¹In 1998, LMH saw 519 asthmatics in its Emergency Department, representing 1% of total Emergency Department visits (41,509).

5. One way Licking Memorial Hospital is keeping those with asthma well and out of the hospital is through its Community Case Management program. A registered respiratory therapist works with asthmatics in a weekly clinic as well as their homes to help keep their asthma under control.

1999 Asthma Clinic Pts. ⁵	E.R. Visits 6 Mos. Before Community Case Mgmt.	E.R. Visits 6 Mos. After Community Case Mgmt.	% Decrease
36	16	9	43.8%

6. 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.

	Goal	LMH Current Avg. ⁶
Turn-around times for emergency ABGs	20 minutes	14 minutes

¹ May, 1999 issue of Respiratory Care, "Monitoring Quality in a Respiratory Care Protocol Service".
² Began measuring in October of 1999. Based on LMH patient data for first quarter of 2000.
³ Standard established by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.
⁴ Based on 1998 LMH data reported to Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield national study.
⁵ Based on LMH patient data from 1999.
⁶ Measured monthly. Based on LMH patient data for first quarter of 2000.

Fast Facts

- There were 78,048 respiratory procedures performed in 1999 at LMH. Of these, 4,778 were to set up oxygen treatment.
- There were 1,289 Pulmonary Rehabilitation visits made to LMH last year.
- In 1998 there were 177 deaths resulting from asthma in Ohio. Licking County has not had a death from asthma since 1997.
- There are 20 full-time respiratory care professionals on staff at Licking Memorial Hospital.

Making Tracks with Asthma Camp



Area kids can make tracks to Licking Memorial's asthma camp June 16 and make strides in their control over asthma. Called Camp Feelin' Fine, the one-day, free program teaches kids age 7 through 14 all about asthma. Camp Feelin' Fine runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and is taught by respiratory therapists, nurses and a pediatrician, Dr. Richard Baltisberger.

"We teach them what triggers their asthma, so they can learn how to manage it on their own," explained Dr. Baltisberger.

Camp Feelin' Fine also covers stress reduction and how to deal with feelings common among children with asthma.

"I think it's good for kids to be around other kids with the same condition because they see that they are not alone," Dr. Baltisberger noted.

Held at the Infirmary Mound Park, campers will mix learning with crafts, hikes and a cook-out lunch.

"The camp teaches them how to stay active in spite of their condition," he added.

Applying is easy. Just call 348-4968 to register. The deadline for registration is June 9.

Keeping Them Well

Keeping individuals with respiratory conditions well requires a lot of education. Individuals must learn about control and rescue medications, exercise and diet, and other lifestyle factors. Licking Memorial Hospital offers several helpful programs to teach those with respiratory conditions how to lead active, productive lifestyles.

• **Asthma Clinic** - Licking Memorial Hospital operates an asthma clinic to help provide advice and guidance to those who have been diagnosed with asthma. The clinic is open twice a week and by appointment. Elliott Gerber, a registered respiratory therapist, teaches clients how to manage asthma on a daily basis and what to do in the event of an asthma attack. Clients are given the tools to maintain a normal, active lifestyle.

• **Pulmonary Rehabilitation** - Patients suffering from chronic respiratory illnesses, such as emphysema or asthma, can attend Licking Memorial's Pulmonary Rehabilitation program twice weekly. Participants exercise to help keep their lungs and heart in optimal condition under the watchful eye of registered respiratory therapists. The program not only helps with a participant's medical condition, but provides an opportunity for camaraderie and friendship. (See SUCCESS STORY)

SUCCESS STORY

Breathing a Little Easier

It's life as usual for Barbara Combs. Several times a week she baby-sits her two grandchildren (both under age two!). She runs errands, cooks dinner and cleans house. And, she just got back from a family vacation to Disney World. What's unique about the 51-year-old is that she does all of this pulling an oxygen tank behind her.

"You either work with it or work against it," said Barbara Combs of her life with emphysema.

When initially diagnosed, Barbara was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit at Licking Memorial Hospital where 23 pounds of fluid were drained from her body. That was when she was told she had to quit smoking and would need to use an oxygen tank to combat her emphysema.

"When Dr. Rawlinson told me that I would have to be on oxygen the rest of my life, I looked at my daughters and said to myself, 'If this is the way it has to be, then this is what we'll do.'"

The first big step was to kick the smoking habit. A smoker for 30 years, quitting wasn't easy. "It was a family effort. They were always there to cheer me on," she recalled.

"Basically I do pretty much what I want to do. I do tire more easily, so I pace myself . . . I know what my limits are," she explained.

"My biggest challenge is to keep my weight down," Barbara continued. "I'm like a sponge and bloat up for no reason at all."

"You begin to wonder how many days you have left. I'm not sure where this route leads me, but I'm not going to give up," she said.

Pulmonary rehabilitation has helped Barbara keep a positive outlook. "I don't just go for the exercise, but for the companionship," she explained. "It's good to be around others who are going through the same thing."



Barbara Combs faithfully exercises during Licking Memorial's Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program. She is under the care of board-certified pulmonologist Dr. William Rawlinson.

"I refuse to give into it. I've got too many things to do."

If you would like more information on our Asthma Clinic, call Licking Memorial Hospital at 348-4611.