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Licking Memorial Health Systems

measurably different for your health!

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CHF Care

HEALTH TIP

Chronic heart failure (CHF) patients need to pay close attention to any changes in symptoms. Notify your physician immediately if you notice any worsening or new symptoms, including the following:

- Sudden weight gain (three or more pounds in one day, or five or more pounds in one week)
- Shortness of breath while at rest
- Increased swelling in legs and ankles
- Swelling or pain in the abdomen
- Frequent dry, hacking cough
- Increased fatigue

...a community ***report on patient care quality.***

CHF Care: How do we compare?

At Licking Memorial Hospital, 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 2002	*LMH 2003*	*LMH 1/04-11/04*	*Benchmark (1)*
Average length of stay for CHF patients	**4.0** days	**3.4** days	**3.1** days	**5.5** days

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

	LMH 2002	*LMH 2003*	*LMH 1/04-11/04*	*Benchmark (1)*
CHF inpatient mortality	**3.8%**	**2.9%**	**1.0%**	**3.8%**

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 7/02-12/02	*LMH 2003*	*LMH 1/04-11/04*	*Benchmark (1)*
LVF Assessment	**88%**	**93%**	**95%**	**87%**

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 7/02-12/02	*LMH 2003*	*LMH 1/04-11/04*	*Benchmark*
CHF patients on ACE at discharge	**84%**	**85%**	**91%**	**75%** (1)
CHF patients on beta blockers at discharge	**N/A** (2)	**77%**	**95%**	greater than **90%** (3)
		LMH 2003	*LMH 1/04-9/04*	*LMH Goal*
LMHS office CHF patients on ACE or ARB		**98%**	**94%**	greater than **90%** (3)

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.

All discharge instructions completed	
LMH 7/02-12/02	*LMH 2003*
73%	**85%**
LMH 1/04-11/04	*Benchmark (1)*
86%	**53%**

Data Footnotes:

(1) Comparative data from the Midas comparative database.

(2) Data collection began in January 2003.

(3) Benchmark indicates LMH goal.

LMH Echocardiology Lab is Accredited

The Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Echocardiography Lab is accredited by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories (ICAEL). The laboratory was one of the first 240 echocardiography laboratories in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico to be so recognized for its commitment to high quality patient care and for providing quality diagnostic testing.

Accreditation signifies that the LMH facility has been reviewed by an independent agency that recognizes the laboratory's commitment to quality testing for the diagnosis of heart disease. LMH Cardiology Patient Care Manager Patty Merrick, C.N.P., said the accreditation "shows our strong commitment to our patients as we work with them in the fight against cardiovascular disease."

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. One American dies every 32 seconds from cardiovascular disease or disorders of the heart and blood vessels. Additionally, cardiovascular disease costs Americans nearly $84 billion each year in health services, medications and lost work due to disability.

Cardiac structure and flow information provided by echocardiographic testing is useful in the detection and management of many types of heart disease. This noninvasive test has become one of the standard diagnostic tools in cardiology, with an estimated 10 million echocardiograms performed annually in the United States. An echocardiogram is the gold standard for evaluating ejection fraction (EF) and diagnosing possible heart failure. Ejection fraction is a measurement of how well the heart is pumping.

Echocardiography is a complex imaging technique that relies on the experience and training of both the physician and sonographer. Their interpretive and technical abilities determine the diagnostic accuracy of an echocardiographic examination. The ICAEL accreditation program

Licking Memorial Hospital Cardiology Department imaging specialists (from left) Patricia Smith, R.D.M.S., R.D.C.S., and Shawna Westbrook, R.D.C.S., are national-registered diagnostic cardiac sonographers.

evaluates the quality of these and other critical elements of an echocardiography laboratory.

The ICAEL was established with the support of the American Society of Echocardiography, the American College of Cardiology and the Society of Pediatric Echocardiography. The purpose of the nonprofit organization is to provide a peer review mechanism to encourage and recognize the provision of quality echocardiographic diagnostic evaluations. Participation in the accreditation process is voluntary.

A PATIENT'S STORY: Learning to Live with CHF

It takes a lot to slow down Allen "Andy" Sayers. "I'm the kind of guy that, as long as one of my legs isn't missing, I just keep on going," the 54-year-old Newark resident said. "If one were broken off, I'd probably just superglue it back on and get back to what I was doing. So, you can imagine what this has been like for me," he said, referring to his November 2004 diagnosis of chronic heart failure (CHF).

CHF is a condition in which the heart is weakened so that it doesn't pump blood as efficiently as it should. Blood returning to the heart backs up, or congests, in the veins. Excess fluid is forced from the blood vessels into tissues – usually in the feet and legs and abdomen – resulting in swelling.

Blood also can back up in the blood vessels of the lungs, forcing fluid into the lungs and causing shortness of breath. The kidneys may not eliminate fluids from the body well, compounding the problem of excess fluid elsewhere.

For a couple of weeks prior to his diagnosis, Andy had been experiencing chest pain and a persistent cough. He was short of breath and didn't have nearly as much energy as he was accustomed to. "I couldn't get any distance on my walking," the former gas station operator said. "I used to walk three or four miles and then turn around and walk right back. Now I'm lucky to walk a block. I'd like to get up to at least a couple of miles again."

He now receives regular medical care from Debra Heldman, M.D., a cardiologist with Licking Memorial Hospital. "She checks me out and sees if I'm improving," Andy said. "I think the care I get at Licking Memorial Hospital is wonderful. I already feel like I can move a little bit further now without getting as winded."

Andy is learning to live with CHF and is working to improve his health through exercise, changes to his diet, and medication. "Like the doctor said, you have to wait and see what tomorrow brings," he said.

Echocardiograms Let Health Care Providers See What Patients' Hearts Have to Say

LISTEN TO YOUR HEART. CARDIAC HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS USING ECHOCARDIOGRAM TECHNOLOGY ARE HEEDING THIS ADVICE AS A MEANS TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT PATIENTS' HEARTS.

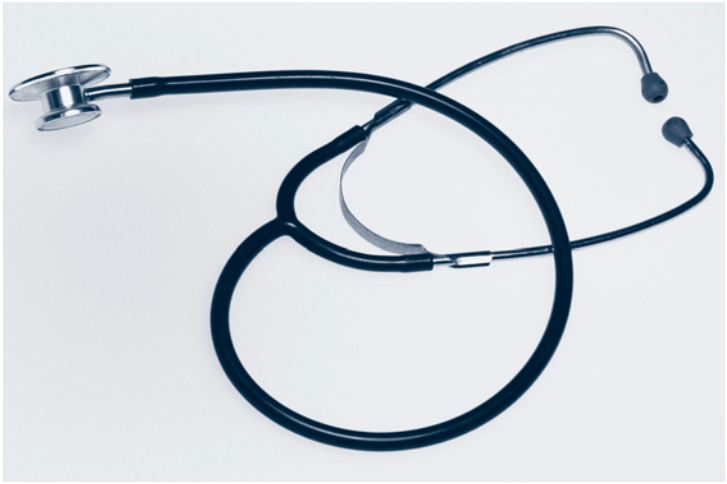
An echocardiogram (also referred to as an echo) is an ultrasound examination of the heart. It uses ultrasound – high-frequency sound waves – to create detailed pictures of the heart's four chambers and valves. The sound waves produce images and sounds that show how the heart is functioning and reveal damage and disease.

Specific information provided by an echocardiogram includes the size of the heart's chambers and its pumping function. The dimension of the heart cavity and thickness of its walls can indicate the presence of certain types of heart disease.

Licking Memorial Hospital Cardiology Department imaging specialists Shawna Westbrook, R.D.C.S., and Patricia Smith, R.D.M.S., R.D.C.S., are national-registered diagnostic cardiac sonographers. They work in the Licking Memorial Hospital Echocardiography Lab, which is accredited by the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Echocardiography Laboratories.

"With an echocardiogram, we can see the heart's size and watch as the muscle squeezes and relaxes," Shawna said. "It can show ejection fraction and function of the heart and structural abnormalities. It gives quite a lot of detail."

Ejection fraction is the percentage of blood that is pumped out of the heart each time it beats. Oftentimes, people mistakenly think that ejection fraction refers to the percentage of their heart muscle that is working. Actually, a normally functioning



heart pumps out only 50 to 70 percent of the blood inside. Ejection fraction of a damaged heart may fall below 40 percent, signaling systolic heart failure.

With left-ventricular heart failure, the left side of the heart must work harder to pump the normal amount of blood. A patient with this form of heart failure may have difficulty breathing. When the left-ventricular pump function is reduced, the left and right ventricles tend to become enlarged. Echocardiography can measure the severity of this enlargement. Right-ventricular heart failure is caused by damage to the lungs or by left heart failure, resulting in increased right-sided volume and pressure. Patients may notice swelling in their hands, legs and abdomen.

Echocardiograms recorded at regular intervals can help a physician monitor the patient's progress. Depending on his/her doctor's orders, a chronic heart failure (CHF) patient may receive an echocardiogram every one to three years, Shawna said.