



Licking Memorial Health Systems

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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.

Children's Care... How do we compare?

1. One of the most important steps a community can take to improve the health of children is to ensure they receive timely immunizations. In July of 1999, Licking Memorial Health Systems, the Newark City Health Department and the Licking County Health Department launched a community-wide effort to determine, and then improve, the immunization rate for Licking County children two years of age and younger. Because immunization records were scattered across agencies and area physician offices, it took a coordinated effort to determine the rate. Immunization tracking software used by the city and county health departments was purchased by LMHS and provided to 35 local physician offices participating in the program. LMHS staff members then manually entered more than 5000 pediatric records from the various offices in order to accurately define the county's immunization rate.

	Licking County ¹	State ²	National ³	Healthy People 2000 Goal ⁴
% of children immunized	78%	72.7%	79%	90%

Quality Note: Since local healthcare providers are linked by a common computer system, up-to-date immunization information can be accessed any time, from any provider location. The program increases the opportunities to identify those children in need of immunizations.

2. Accidents are the leading cause of death among children.⁵ Last year LMHS teamed up with State Farm Insurance and the Ohio State Highway Patrol to conduct regular car seat safety inspections for infants and children. Inspections revealed that the vast majority of safety seats checked were improperly installed.

	Licking County ⁶	National Avg. ⁷	
% of child car seats improperly installed	90%	79%	
Half of the children four years of age or younger who died in a car accident in 1999 were not in a safety seat or were improperly restrained. ⁸			
	Licking County	State	National
# of deaths	1	11	550
# improperly restrained	0	1	49
# without a safety seat	0	3	225

Quality Note: LMHS sent four nurses for training in August to become Certified Car Seat Safety Technicians. The week-long training is conducted by the Ohio Department of Public Safety.

3. The Ohio Childhood Lead Prevention Program (OCLPP) recommends that all children age 6-36 months who live in a zip code designated for universal lead screening be tested twice, at least 12 months apart. Also, children age 36-72 months who live in a designated zip code should be tested if they have not previously been tested. Newark's zip code of 43055 has been targeted for universal lead screenings. LMHS' Community Health Dept. conducts ongoing free lead screenings for the area.

	Licking County ⁹	Fairfield County ⁹	Ohio ⁹
# screened	819	852	97,378
% who screened positive	2.8%	1.2%	10.2%

4. Most children today are treated on an outpatient basis at hospitals. Children are typically admitted only if they are severely ill or injured. The top three reasons for pediatric admissions in 1999 at LMH were pneumonia, dehydration and appendicitis, respectively.

	LMH 1998	LMH 1999	National Avg. ¹⁰
% of all hospital admissions from kids 18 years or under	4.03%	4.03%	10.9%

5. Nationally, a child or adolescent visits an emergency department once every second.¹¹ Pediatric visits make up one-fourth of the total emergency department visits at Licking Memorial Hospital. The top three reasons for pediatric emergency visits in 1999 at LMH were ear infections, upper respiratory infections and throat infections, respectively.

	LMH 1998	LMH 1999	National Avg. ¹¹
% of E.D. visits from children 18 years or under	27.4%	26.7%	41.2%

6. At LMHS, a community case manager works with children who have been hospitalized for a chronic medical condition to help them prevent further visits to the emergency department or a hospital admission. Children with chronic conditions usually require a hospital stay 10 times longer than other children.¹⁰

	LMH Avg. ¹²
Average decrease in hospital days for children after 1 year of case management	45%
Average decrease in emergency department visits for children after 1 year of case management	75%

7. LMHS believes it is easier to develop good health habits when you are young than to change bad health habits when you are older. To this end, LMHS started a Partners in Wellness program in 1994 that sends Community Health nurses into third and sixth grade classrooms on a bi-weekly basis in nine area school districts. The nurses teach health prevention tactics from cold prevention to good nutrition. The top three things third graders have learned from the classes are as follows:¹³

	Before Program	After Program
% of children who knew dairy was the best source of calcium	31%	60%
% of children who knew to "just say no" to cigarettes	65%	78%
% of children who understood the importance of the food pyramid in supplying daily vitamins and minerals	40%	72%

8. Unfortunately, child abuse is a health concern that impacts our community. In February of 1999, The Kids' Place of Licking County opened its doors to provide a child-friendly, safe environment where comprehensive assessments could be done for children suspected of child abuse and/or neglect. At The Kids' Place, both medical and verbal evidence can be obtained at one time, which means less stress for the child. The Kids' Place is a cooperative effort of Licking Memorial Health Systems, the Licking County Prosecutor's office, the Licking County Sheriff's Department, the Newark City Police Department and the Licking County Department of Human Services, Children's Services Division.

	1999 ¹⁴	2000 ¹⁴
Total # of children evaluated	93	72
% of children evaluated who were suspected sexual abuse victims	84%	89%
% of children who were female	80%	85%
% of children who were male	20%	15%
Most common age range (2-6 years)	48%	43%

9. The Central Ohio Poison Center reports Licking County statistics as follows. The center's number is 1-800-682-7625.

	1999 ¹⁵	2000 ¹⁵
Total number of calls from Licking County	62	57
% of children who suffered the effects of poison	74.2%	66.7%
Most common age range (0-5 years)	29%	35.1%
% who were treated and released home from LMH only	65.6%	81.1%

1. Ohio Department of Health Immunization Program. Newark City Health Department, first quarter of 2000 analysis.
2. Ohio Department of Health, 1999.
3. Centers for Disease Control, 1998.
4. Healthy People 2000 Goal established by the Federal Government.
5. Vital Statistics of the U.S., 1998. (CA-A Cancer Journal for Clinicians, January/February, 1999. Cancer Statistics 1999.)
6. Data based on car seat safety inspections conducted in Licking County in 2000 by the Granville Post of the Ohio State Highway Patrol, State Farm Insurance and LMHS.
7. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Observed patterns of misuse of child safety seats. Traffic Tec, Sept. 1996, Washington, DC.
8. U.S. Department of Transportation. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Traffic Safety Facts 1999.
9. Ohio Department of Health, 1999. Ohio Childhood Lead Poisoning Program county data.
10. National Association of Children's Hospitals and Related Institutions (NACHRE), 1999.
11. Child and Adolescent Emergency Department Data Book, 1992-1994 National Center for Health Statistics National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey.
12. LMH patient data for 1994-2000 for case managed patients age 18 years or under.
13. Based on student surveys from 1998-99 for third graders from nine area school districts.
14. Kids' Place statistics for 1999 are from February - December, 1999. Data for 2000 is from January - November, 2000.
15. Central Ohio Poison Center. Data from July, 1999 - June, 2000.

SUCCESS STORY

Taking the first step...

One of the joys of parenthood is watching your child take his or her first step. For Karen and George Kosco, this meant waiting two and a half years.

The Kosco's daughter, Natalie, has cerebral palsy. The condition causes the brain to miscommunicate with the muscles. "It's something that will affect her the rest of her life," says Karen.

Natalie's rehabilitation journey began in November of 1997 when she was a year and a half old.

"She was unable to sit up on her own and could barely roll over," recalls physical therapist Kathy Lawrence.

Through weekly sessions with both physical and occupational therapists, Natalie has come a long way, according to Kathy.

The physical therapy staff worked with Natalie's underused muscles to help stretch and strengthen them. Over time, she has learned to sit up, crawl, stand up, and even walk, with the assistance of braces and a walker. On September 25, Natalie reached her greatest milestone. She took her first independent step with canes while at home with her parents.

"She was so excited to show her therapists," Karen recounts. "She was really proud of herself."

"Natalie loves going to therapy," Karen adds. "It's like she's going to see friends. Everyone knows her by name and has little games they play with her."

"It's different for the therapists to deal with a child than an adult," Karen continues. "With Natalie, it's totally hands on. She doesn't always want to do what they want her to, but the therapists do whatever it takes to motivate Natalie, whether that's playing with a toy or taking some time out to read her a story... They just don't do that anywhere."

Natalie holds a special place with the Physical Therapy Department staff as well.

"She is such an inspiration to the patients," Kathy explains. "They see her and think, she's just a little girl and look what she can do. I can give it my best, too."



Above: "She's a very remarkable little girl," says physical therapist Kathy Lawrence.



Left: Natalie shares a proud moment.

LMH Offers Health Coverage for Kids

There are a large number of children in Licking County who do not receive health care because their parents or guardians earn too much income to qualify for government programs, such as Medicaid, Healthy Start or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIPs), but not enough to purchase health insurance for their dependents.

In July of this year, LMHS began Licking Memorial Health Coverage for Kids, a program designed for those who do not have access to health insurance. The program covers routine physician and dental visits, diagnostic testing, emergency department visits, outpatient surgery, therapy, mental health services, home health care and prescription drugs.

To qualify, a child must be 18 years of age or younger, be a Licking County resident and a citizen of the United States, not qualify for any Medicaid program, such as Healthy Start or CHIPs, and the child's family income must be between 200-250% of the federal poverty level.

Applications can be obtained by calling Corporate Health Benefits, a Division of Community Health Plan of Ohio (CHPO) at 740-348-1401. Participants will be responsible for applicable co-pays and a portion of the monthly premium based on their income level.

Fast Facts

- LMHS has employed three new pediatricians in recent months: Dr. Shelley Gittens and Dr. Robert Baun have joined Dr. Rick Baltisberger and Dr. Hanaa Abdelmessih at Licking Memorial Pediatrics in Newark. Dr. Stacey Popko, an internist and pediatrician, opened a practice in Johnstown this month.
- Sleepwalking is more common in children than in adolescents and adults. Boys are more likely to sleepwalk than girls and the most common ages are 11 and 12. In August of 2000, LMHS hired a full-time sleep medicine physician, Dr. Michael Saribalas, who specializes in both pediatric and adult sleep disorders.
- The LMHS Partners in Wellness Program reaches around 1600 third and sixth graders during the course of a school year, representing an estimated 25,600 student encounters a year!!!

Visit 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.