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## Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street  
Newark, Ohio 43055

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**Please take a few minutes to read  
this month's report on patient  
care quality. You'll soon discover  
why Licking Memorial Hospital  
is measurably different  
for your health!**

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

**Call our Health Line at  
348-4YOU.**



**Licking Memorial  
Health Systems**

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**Patient  
Safety**

measurably  
**different**  
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**HEALTH TIPS**

The National Center for Injury and Prevention Control (NCIPC) offers the following suggestions for preventing falls:

- Exercise regularly to maintain strength, flexibility, mobility and balance.
- Review current over-the counter and prescription medications with your physician periodically.
- Check your vision regularly.
- Make your home a safer place in which to live. (See tips inside.)

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



# 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** The Institute of Medicine published a report in 2000 that highlighted the stunning effects of medication errors. The report sets forth a national agenda for reducing medical errors and improving patient safety through the design of a safer health system. Although LMH's medication error rate is better than the national benchmark, we make continuous efforts to improve the process.

	LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>% Medication errors</b>	<b>0.024%</b>	<b>0.030%</b>	<b>0.31%</b>

LMH has dispensed more than 2.5 million doses of medication so far this year.

**2** Although all adverse drug reactions cannot be anticipated, a thorough assessment of a patient's allergies and past drug reactions can help ensure appropriate use of drugs.

	LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>% Patients with an adverse drug reaction</b>	<b>0.86%</b>	<b>1.66%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

**3** While the need for registered nurses is rising, supply remains the same. Also, the number of students enrolled in nursing programs has dropped an average of 30 percent each year for the past five years. <sup>(3)</sup> LMH recruits clinical graduates from area nursing schools for open positions at the hospital.

	LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	State Benchmark <sup>(4)</sup>
<b>Vacancy rate for nurses</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>10%</b>

**4** Last year LMH took actions to reduce our fall rate. There is now a comprehensive assessment done to determine if a patient is at risk for a fall when a person is admitted and during the stay. Personal alarms and bed sensors were purchased to better alert the staff to a potential fall.

	LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(5)</sup>
<b>% Patient falls per 100 patient days</b>	<b>.25%</b>	<b>.40%</b>	<b>.41%</b>

**5** There are many possible causes for unscheduled returns to a hospital, including premature discharge, inadequate discharge planning, discharge plan delay or failure, patient non-compliance, lack of community resources, or insufficient patient education. Although some returns may be unavoidable, the frequency of those returns should be monitored.

	LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(5)</sup>
<b>% Unexpected returns to ED within 24 hours of ED discharge</b>	<b>1.19%</b>	<b>1.46%</b>	<b>.87%</b>
<b>% Unscheduled readmissions to LMH within 31 days of discharge</b>	<b>6.99%</b>	<b>7.06%</b>	<b>4.71%</b>

## 6

Protecting patients from hospital-acquired or "nosocomial" infections is a primary patient safety goal. Per the Centers for Disease Control recommendations, LMH tracks high-risk patients, including those with an increased exposure to infection due to the presence of an invasive device, such as a ventilator, catheter or central venous line.

Infection rate for ventilator patients		
LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(6)</sup>
<b>7.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>9.1</b>

  

Urinary tract infection rate for patients with urinary catheters		
LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(6)</sup>
<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>

  

Bloodstream infection rate for patients with central venous catheters		
LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10/01	National Benchmark <sup>(6)</sup>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>4.1</b>

## 7

Conscious sedation is when a patient has a reduced sense of consciousness but can still respond to certain stimuli. An adverse event during conscious sedation is defined as an unplanned recovery in the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, unplanned admission to the ICU or CCU, prolonged recovery greater than three hours, the need for mechanical respiratory support, death or some other unintended or unplanned event.

% Adverse events due to conscious sedation		
LMH 2000	LMH 1/01-10-01	LMH Goal <sup>(6)</sup>
<b>.12%</b>	<b>.07%</b>	<b>&lt;.1%</b>

**Data Footnotes:**  
**(1)** To Err is Human – Building a Safer Health System, National Academy Press, Washington D.C., 2000.  
**(2)** Incidence of Adverse Drug Events and Potential Adverse Drug Events. JAMA, July 5, 1995.  
**(3)** American Association of Colleges of Nursing, February 2001.  
**(4)** Ohio Nurses Association. Business First, October 13, 2000.  
**(5)** National benchmark from fourth quarter 2000 data, The Association of Maryland Hospitals & Health Systems QI Project.  
**(6)** CDC National Nosocomial Infections Surveillance System pooled mean from January 1995 through April 2000.

# Communication for Healthier Living

## A PATIENT'S STORY

Ora Weiss doesn't like having his care rushed, his medical history overlooked or his concerns ignored. No one does. That's why he is thankful to have found a physician who gives him the attention he and all patients deserve.

Since 1996, Ora has received medical care from Paul Simmons, M.D., of Licking Memorial Internal Medicine.

Ora has hypercholesterolemia, and Dr. Simmons is helping him find the best means of lowering his cholesterol.

For about a year, that course of action meant that Ora would take Baycol,<sup>®</sup> a cholesterol-lowering medication. However, in August of this year, Bayer Pharmaceutical voluntarily recalled the medication because of its link to rhabdomyolysis, a life-threatening condition involving the destruction of muscle tissue.

The Licking Memorial Health Professionals' Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system allowed its physician offices to instantly identify which patients were receiving the drug, and staff members contacted them by

phone to notify them of the recall and discuss alternative therapies.

Most of the 374 patients of Health Professionals physicians who were taking Baycol<sup>®</sup> learned about the recall the day before it was reported in the media; Ora heard from his doctor's office within 24 hours.

Without the EMR system, it could have been much longer. But the system allows users to immediately locate every patient taking a certain medication, said Christine McGee, Vice President of Physician Services.

"With only paper charts, you have no way of knowing which patients are taking a drug, except by memory," she said. "The EMR gives us immediate access to such information, since all patient records are in the system and can be recalled by almost any parameter."

Ora appreciates the open lines of communication he has with his physician. The EMR system helps his physician keep those lines open—and it shows that Licking Memorial Health Systems knows that patient safety is a top priority.



*Ora Weiss, a patient of Paul Simmons, M.D., is pleased to receive medical care from a physician's office and a health system where his health concerns are top priority.*

**The EMR allows  
physician offices to  
instantly identify which  
patients are taking  
a specific medication.**

## Protecting Patients

When a patient falls, it can mean more than a moment of embarrassment and discomfort.

- A fall can result in injury, which may prolong hospitalization.
- Health complications can result.
- Mobility can decrease.
- Perception of safety and psychological well-being may be significantly affected, making people hesitant to take part in physical rehabilitation.

Licking Memorial Health Systems' Risk Manager Paula Alexander said factors affecting a patient's risk of falling include health status, response to medication or anesthesia and external environmental factors.

LMH nurses ask patients a variety of questions to determine their level of risk for falling. Patients deemed to be at greatest risk for falling are each given an orange armband.

"That is just an identifier to anyone who walks into that patient's room," Alexander said.

The patient's risk is further noted with an orange paper that calls for status checks hourly and expanded checks every two hours.

As a third precaution, some patients are issued a bed alarm system that is activated at the nurses' station if a significant decrease in total weight on the bed is recorded.

"Hopefully, we've put enough safeguards in the way to reduce the risks of patients falling," Alexander said.

## Reduce Your Risk of Falling at Home

FOR PATIENTS BELIEVED TO BE AT HIGH RISK FOR FALLING, LICKING MEMORIAL HEALTH SYSTEMS (LMHS) HAS SPECIAL IN-HOSPITAL MONITORING DEVICES IN PLACE. UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN THESE PATIENTS ARE AT HOME, THEY – AND OTHERS – OFTEN UNKNOWINGLY FACE MULTIPLE DANGERS THAT COULD LEAD TO A FALL.

People at greatest risk for falling include those who are older than 70, are taking more than three medications, and/or have fallen in the past six to 12 months, according to LMHS Risk Manager Paula Alexander.

"Take a good look at the environment your older loved ones live in," Alexander suggests. "It can be surprising to see how many dangers exist in our homes."

### Bathroom

Dangers here include small rugs that you can trip over easily and towel racks you use as handles for support. Non-skid mats, elevated toilet seats and safety rails reduce the risk of falling in this room. Use of textured appliqués and grab bars in the shower, as well as installation of a shower seat, also help.

### Kitchen

Move often-used items to more accessible areas – including cupboards and drawers that you can open without bending or having to stretch.

Put non-skid rubber mats near the sink and stove and anywhere else spills or splashes may be common. As in the bathroom, avoid use of small rugs that could cause tripping.

### Living Room and Bedroom

There should be wide spaces allowing ample room to move around easily.

Give people something to hold on to at all points – such as sturdy furniture and/or handrails.

Keep in mind that firm furniture is easier to get into and out of. Chairs with straight backs, armrests and sturdy

cushions are most useful. Instead of replacing current furniture, consider adding sturdy cushions to add height.

### Common Dangers

If a step stool is necessary, select one with a handrail.

Phone cords, extension cords and other electrical cords should be kept out of walkways. Electrical tape may be used to keep cords in place, but do not put cords under carpeting, since this increases risk of fire.

Insufficient lighting decreases visibility. Consider using a flashlight or battery-operated lantern if there are dark areas between light sources in your home. Wobbly handrails can come unfastened. Be sure handrails are secure and sturdy.

Outdoor steps are especially dangerous in the winter months. But indoor steps can be dangerous, too, especially if they are slippery or if carpeting is loose. Also, keep steps free of obstacles. Combine slippery steps with a lack of sturdy handrails and poor lighting, and you have an extremely dangerous place for those who are at high risk for falls.

Licking Memorial Health Systems wants you to be safe – whether you're being treated in our facility or in the comfort of your own home.

## Licking Memorial Health Line

Health information is available around the clock from registered nurses through the [Licking Memorial Health Line](https://www.lmhs.com). Call 348-4YOU (348-4968).