



Licking Memorial Health Systems

1320 West Main Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Behavioral Health Care**.

You'll soon discover why Licking Memorial Hospital is measurably different ... for your health!

Visit us at www.LMHealth.org.

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department.

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Quality Report Card Licking Memorial Health Systems

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Health Tips – Warning Signs of Suicide

Suicide is a major public health problem in the United States, responsible for the deaths of an estimated 32,000 adolescents and adults each year. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has compiled a list of the warning signs that may indicate that someone you know is contemplating taking his or her own life:

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Talking about wanting to die
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Feelings of rage
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Feeling burdensome to others
- Withdrawal or isolation
- Extreme mood swings
- Feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Anxiety, agitation or recklessness
- Talking about seeking revenge

What to do – If someone you know exhibits warning signs of suicide:

- Do not leave the person alone.
- Remove any firearms, alcohol, drugs or sharp objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.
- Call the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- Take the person to an emergency department, or seek help from a medical or mental health professional.

Behavioral Health Care – How do we compare?

Check out our Quality Report Cards online at www.LMHealth.org.

At Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH), 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 healthcare choices.

1 Behavioral health is a broad term that refers to psychiatric and/or chemical dependency illnesses. Inpatient hospitalization for either condition is often necessary for effective intervention. LMH provides a wide range of services for people with behavioral health illnesses at its Shepherd Hill facility. One goal is to transition patients into outpatient settings where they can continue treatment, decreasing the need for readmission.

	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Psychiatric readmissions	2.4%	4.0%	5.1%	less than 5.6%

2 Chemical dependency, also called addiction, is treated as a chronic, progressive and potentially fatal disease. Although Shepherd Hill staff members work with patients to develop individual treatment goals that will meet the patients' needs, the Shepherd Hill program is built around four consistent treatment goals: education, self-diagnosis, self-responsibility and self-treatment. Recovery is dependent upon completion of all goals; therefore, Shepherd Hill monitors when treatment is incomplete and why. When patients leave Shepherd Hill, staff members encourage continuity of care by referring them to other healthcare professionals as needed.

	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Patients with complete treatment	68%	72%	70%	greater than 75%

3 Outcome studies are conducted to monitor and measure the success of chemical dependence treatment. Our data shows how patients are doing up to two years after completing the program. Information regarding abstinence one year after completing the program is self-reported by patients.

	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Patients remaining abstinent	82%	76%	88%	greater than 85%
Improvement in quality of relationships	92%	93%	92%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall physical and mental health	91%	90%	95%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall quality of life	92%	90%	90%	greater than 85%

4 Detoxification – the safe, medically supervised elimination of addictive substances from the body – is the most intensive care offered for chemical dependency patients. Acute withdrawal symptoms are managed by the appropriate medications for each patient's situation. The length of stay for detoxification depends upon the drug of choice and the severity of the withdrawal.

	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Average length of stay – alcohol treatment	2.6	2.5	2.7	less than 3 days
Average length of stay – opiate treatment	2.6	2.6	2.6	less than 4 days
Average length of stay – tranquilizer treatment	3.4	3.1	2.7	less than 5 days

5 Medication education is considered an essential component of providing complete behavioral health care. A thorough understanding of the medication's purpose, side effects and expected response leads to decreased relapse and readmission rates and increased long-term compliance with medication on an outpatient basis.

	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Medication education provided for patients and/or family	99%	99%	100%	greater than 97%

6 Family participation is an important component in patients' recovery. For continuity of care, a licensed professional clinical counselor or a social worker will initiate contact with family members of Shepherd Hill psychiatric inpatients and encourage them to participate in a family meeting during the period of inpatient treatment.

	LMH 2009	LMH 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Social work/family meeting during patient stay	97%	93%	97%	greater than 95%

7 Valproic acid and lithium are two common medications used to treat multiple behavioral health diagnoses. These medications can facilitate control of symptoms and assist in recovery, but both have potentially dangerous side effects. Licking Memorial Behavioral Health professionals monitor their patients' blood at specified intervals to ensure therapeutic levels of the medications and to observe for toxicity or other negative effects on vital organs.

	LMHP 2009	LMHP 2010	LMH 2011	Goal
Appropriate testing complete for patients taking valproic acid (such as Depakote)	97%	96%	94%	greater than 90%
Appropriate testing complete for patients taking lithium (such as Lithobid)	97%	97%	94%	greater than 90%

Patient Story - Paul R.

(At the patient's request, his full name is being withheld to protect his identity.)

Living in Licking County has a different rhythm now for Paul R. than it did when he was growing up as a boy in Granville. As a teenager in the 1970s, he marched to a different beat than many of his classmates, by paying little attention to school assignments or activities. Instead, he focused on his drum set, drinking with friends and getting high on the weekends.

His alcohol and drug abuse escalated over the next 25 years, reaching a dangerous crescendo before Paul sought help through Shepherd Hill to become sober and find a calm inner peace.

Paul left Granville shortly after his high school graduation to live with his father in New York City. Just 18 years old, he had dreams of finding success in the Big Apple as a rock star, with all the luxuries and excitement that accompany fame. "Music has always been a part of my life, and I was now completely in the right place, doing what I love to do. I was living in New York City, playing in a band, learning about the music world, and networking with other musicians. It was an exciting time," Paul reminisced. Unfortunately, his drinking and drug use escalated along with his success. "I was drinking and smoking marijuana more, plus I began taking prescription and 'street' pills," he said.

Paul tried to quit using drugs and alcohol on his own a few times, but the addictions were too strong to overcome. "Every time I tried to control my use, or quit altogether, I just picked up where I left off and began using again," he said. "It is a slow, but progressive disease, and I got sicker and sicker.

"In the late 1990s, my band returned to New York City after a tour in Europe. The very same day we got back, our management company told us that we needed to leave immediately for a two-week tour on the East Coast," Paul recalled. "That afternoon, we headed toward Albany, New York, for a radio show to promote the tour, and we got into a bad accident on the way. I had a severe back injury with two ruptured discs – one at the base of my neck, and the other in the lumbar region – which caused a great deal of chronic pain." Paul's physician prescribed Vicodin to ease the back pain, but it worsened and required increasing doses of the opiate medication.

In pain, and unable to work, Paul's life fell into discord. He said, "I started taking more and more Vicodin, and I was drinking heavily. I was also struggling to make ends meet, so I sublet my apartment. Out of the blue, I received a phone call from one of my former Granville High School classmates. She wanted to let me know about our upcoming 25-year reunion."

Paul boarded a bus and headed home to Granville. He attended the reunion, enjoying the opportunity to reconnect with former classmates, including the one who called him in New York. Then, in keeping with Paul's usual habits, he drank heavily and blacked out. That is when the new cadence in Paul's life began.



The classmate who had called Paul in New York, had previously been married to an alcoholic, and she recognized the signs of his addiction. She approached his family and told them that she thought he needed help. Paul's family offered the opportunity for him to remain in Granville while he received treatment. They contacted a family friend who was a member of

a local 12-Step Program, and Paul accompanied him to a meeting. Paul's family also made arrangements for a meeting with the staff at Shepherd Hill, the Behavioral Health facility at Licking Memorial Hospital.

Paul met first with Cindy Barbour, R.N., B.S.N., CARN, for the initial assessment, and then with Addiction Medicine Physician Frederick N. Karaffa, M.D., to evaluate his overall medical condition and formulate a treatment plan. "Dr. Karaffa is a long-time friend and had been my family's physician when I was a kid, so it was really comforting to be talking to him again in this stressful situation," Paul said.

Paul had compiled a list of items that he considered symptoms of his illness. The list began with "insomnia" and outlined several other issues that Paul believed needed to be treated. He slid the paper across the desk to Dr. Karaffa, who carefully considered the list, then pushed it back across the desk to Paul. He pointed to the last item and said succinctly, "That is your problem." The last item read, "Drinking too much."

Paul immediately began the intensive six-week outpatient program, arriving just after breakfast four days each week. He was assigned a counselor and attended daily lectures that focused on addiction information, disease models, manifestations of addiction, and recovery. Along with other Shepherd Hill patients, Paul participated in daily "tasks" that were designed to help them develop sobriety-building skills. "For me, the tasks were the most valuable part of the program," Paul said. "They helped me develop skills that I use in my everyday life, such as solving conflicts in a non-confrontational manner. My peers were an important factor in my recovery process. We were all very supportive of each other."

Dr. Karaffa showed Paul that he was inadvertently exacerbating his back pain by taking large amounts of Vicodin. "He explained that the mixture of alcohol and Vicodin can cause back pain, so as I increased the amount of pain medication, I was ironically creating more pain." Paul said. "Dr. Karaffa told me that if I stopped taking the Vicodin, the pain would subside on its own pretty quickly. He was right. The pain let up in a short amount of time, and that really jump started my recovery. Now, when the back pain flares up, I take ibuprofen, and it takes care of the worst part of it. That is quite a difference from the invasive back surgery that my former physicians recommended."

Patient Story – Paul R. (continued on next page)

Patient Story – Paul R. (continued from previous page)

Following the six-week outpatient program, Paul started Shepherd Hill's 52-week aftercare program that offers facilitated group sessions. During that time, he also began to perform clerical work as a volunteer in Shepherd Hill's office. Paul said, "Volunteering was completely unknown to me, and I enjoyed the opportunity to help. It was a constructive way to spend my free time, and gave me a way to connect with the world again."

He added, "Dr. Karaffa suggested that I consider teaching music. A couple of days later, I applied at a music store, and got a job providing music lessons. I still give private lessons today, and I also teach at a college and play in several bands with talented local artists. I had no idea when I got sober that these things would still be a part of my life. To be able to take my God-given talents and share them with others and to make a living to provide for my family is incredible!"

Paul reflects on his life with an appreciation for its newly controlled tempo. "I have a deep sense of gratitude to my physicians, counselors, peers, techs and all the other people

at Shepherd Hill. They truly saved my life," he said. "I have had tremendous support from everyone, especially my family. I have a whole litany of principles and people who continue to help me in my recovery."

Paul continues to serve as a sponsor to other 12-Step Program members. He explained, "Because I am sober today, I can look back at my journey with pride, and use those experiences to help others. The past can be a strong asset to helping others."

After achieving sobriety, the components of Paul's life began to harmonize again. He married the classmate who had called him in New York, and became a step-father to two daughters. He and his wife recently observed their 10th anniversary by renewing their vows in a church celebration as his family and 12-Step Program sponsor sat nearby in unwavering support.

Shepherd Hill is a nationally accredited treatment center. For more information, visit the Web site, www.shepherdhill.net, or call (740) 348-4870 or (800) 223-6410 (toll-free).

Golden Years Are Sometimes Marred by Depression

It is a sad fact that suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States, as an estimated 80 Americans take their own lives each day. Senior citizens, age 65 years and older, comprise one of the highest risk groups for suicide. Understanding risk factors and warning signs can help healthcare workers identify patients who are facing a crisis and may be in danger of harming themselves.



Senior citizens who are depressed are at an increased risk for suicide. LMH, in partnership with Pathways of Central Ohio, is taking steps to protect patients who exhibit warning signs of suicide.

"Adults who are 65 years and older comprise 13 percent of the population, but they account for 19 percent of all suicides," cited Craig B. Cairns, M.D., M.P.H., Vice President Medical Affairs at Licking Memorial Health Systems. "Seniors face unique challenges that may be overwhelming to them and can contribute to the development of depression. Complicating the problem, seniors are much less likely to seek a mental health professional's help."

Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) is partnering with Pathways of Central Ohio to identify patients of all ages who may be at risk for suicide, and referring them for follow-up care. "Our staff members in the Emergency Department and on the patient floors are trained to look for warning signs," Dr. Cairns said. "When a patient exhibits warning signs, the staff initiates a caring conversation with the patient and asks if it is okay for someone from Pathway's 2-1-1 Crisis Hotline to call them with a follow-up phone call after they are discharged from LMH. That follow-up phone call can be a life preserver for patients until they can make an appointment with a mental health

professional. It is a reminder that other people care about them, as well as an opportunity to talk about their feelings of sadness and hopelessness."

Factors that can place an older adult at risk for suicide include:

- Diagnosis of a serious illness
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Chronic pain
- Death of a loved one
- Personal losses
- Financial trouble
- Housing problems
- Family difficulties
- Isolation and loneliness

"There is a common misconception that depression is a normal part of aging, but that is completely untrue," Dr. Cairns said. "Depression is a treatable illness at any age, and remarkable improvements in the quality of life are possible. Studies have shown that it is extremely important for older adults to have an active social network and circles of friends. Joining a club or volunteering can be very uplifting for their mental health."

Pathways of Central Ohio's 2-1-1 Crisis Hotline is affiliated with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. It can be reached by calling 2-1-1 on most phones in Licking County, or toll-free at (800) 544-1601. All calls are confidential. The 2-1-1 Crisis Hotline staff welcomes callers of all ages, and can make recommendations to friends and family who are concerned that a loved one may be at risk of suicide.