

Quality Report Card

Licking Memorial Health Systems



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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE

The Shepherd Hill Difference

Shepherd Hill is a nationally accredited treatment center that focuses on the treatment of patients with a substance use disorder (SUD). As the Behavioral Health Department of Licking Memorial Hospital, Shepherd Hill focuses on treating patients, ages 18 and older, who are experiencing substance use and mental health disorders by providing the most advanced research and evidence-based treatment.

While many addiction treatment centers focus primarily on the point of crisis, Shepherd Hill stands out by treating SUDs as a multi-dimensional problem rather than a single medical issue. Shepherd Hill distinguishes itself by adopting a “whole person” philosophy that integrates intensive medical oversight with psychological and spiritual support. This unique approach is designed to bridge the gap between clinical stabilization and long-term sobriety.

Shepherd Hill uses the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) placement criteria to determine the appropriate level of care. The goal is to match the intensity of treatment with the severity of the patient’s illness to provide an individualized plan that meets the patient’s specific needs.

All programs at Shepherd Hill are staffed by highly trained professionals to ensure that each patient receives care from an individualized treatment team consisting of an addictionologist, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, addiction counselors, registered nurses, and spiritual counselors.

At Shepherd Hill, SUD is treated as a chronic, progressive, and potentially fatal disease. Differences in body chemistry can cause an inability to successfully metabolize mood-altering substances. Individuals whose body chemistry does not allow them to successfully metabolize substances must learn to live a life of total abstinence from mood-altering chemicals. The staff at Shepherd Hill help patients to recover in a dignified manner using four primary treatment goals:

- Self-diagnosis – the person recognizes that they have a substance use disorder
- Self-responsibility – the patient recognizes that it is their responsibility to treat their disease
- Self-treatment – the patient recognizes that it is their responsibility to adhere to their personalized treatment

- Education – the patient receives information on SUD, learns the difference between safe and unsafe behaviors, and understands how to modify those behaviors to remain abstinent and in recovery

Approximately 50 percent of people with SUD also have a co-occurring psychiatric illness, such as depression, anxiety, or psychosis; however, it is not always clear whether the psychiatric illness manifests as a symptom of the SUD or if it is a truly co-occurring condition. Shepherd Hill offers partial hospitalization and intensive outpatient psychiatric services to evaluate patients over time and determine the appropriate course of treatment.

Treatment may include individual and group counseling, education in community resources, communication skills, stress management, relaxation techniques, social skills, and medication. Family involvement is also important. Family programs are available to help educate and inform the families of patients about chemical dependency. The goal is to help family members to better understand the disease and how they have been affected by living with it. Families learn about 12-step programs available to assist them in their role of patient recovery.

After treatment is completed at Shepherd Hill, patients are encouraged to attend weekly facilitated aftercare groups. These groups help build community and accountability. They offer structure, purpose, and connection, and give individuals the tools needed to replace unhealthy habits, strengthen relationships, and maintain long-term sobriety.



Measurably Different ... for Your Health!

Patient Story – Emma*

At a very young age, Emma was introduced to illegal drugs and alcohol. Her mother was suffering from substance use disorder (SUD) and began sharing the drugs and alcohol with Emma to assist her in dealing with the trauma of their lifestyle. For many years, Emma believed the illegal substances were necessary to survive.

“I saw how the drugs made my mother numb to everything around her, and I wanted to feel that way too,” Emma shared. “I just wanted to escape the reality of what was happening to me.”

As an adult, Emma knew that continued use of illegal drugs and alcohol was not healthy for her or her own children. She struggled to control her SUD. Finally, she sought assistance at a local facility that offered medication for addiction treatment. Emma felt the prescription medication was doing more harm than good, and that she needed something else to help her fully quit taking drugs and drinking.

“The medication actually made me feel as though I were under the influence of illegal drugs,” Emma said. “I wanted something different, and I desperately needed more support and accountability.”

Leaving the other facility at the beginning of 2026, Emma began the Intensive Outpatient Program at Shepherd Hill. The staff of Shepherd Hill treat addiction as a chronic, progressive, and potentially fatal disease. Differences in body chemistry can cause an inability to successfully metabolize mood-altering substances. Individuals whose body chemistry does not allow them to successfully metabolize substances must learn to live a life of total abstinence from mood-altering chemicals. The treatment team members help patients to recover in a dignified manner using four primary treatment goals:

- Education
- Self-diagnosis
- Self-responsibility
- Self-treatment

Successful achievement of these goals culminates in relapse prevention.

“The staff members at Shepherd Hill are incredible people. They treat everyone as an individual, with compassion and kindness,” Emma exclaimed. “They have helped me advance so much. While they are caring, they also know when to push, because they want their patients to succeed in managing the disorder. The education materials are also very helpful in explaining that substance abuse is a disease and should be treated as such.”

Emma receives therapy to assist in examining her past traumas and building new skills to change her character and break old habits so that she can fight the temptation to use drugs. In addition to therapy, Emma was prescribed a different medication that has been more effective. The treatment is administered once a month by a professional and blocks neural receptors that create the feeling of intoxication. Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) has been proven effective in helping patients abstain from alcohol and mood-altering drugs with minimal cravings or withdrawal symptoms.

After completing the Intensive Outpatient Program, Emma began the Aftercare Program. Patients are encouraged to attend weekly, facilitated aftercare groups at Shepherd Hill. She is now enrolled in college working on a degree in addiction counseling. Her goal is to earn her Chemical Dependency Counselor Assistant (CDCA) license.

“I have always been interested in helping others to overcome addiction, and after seeing the passion that the staff at Shepherd Hill has for their patients, I was even more convinced that I could make a difference for someone facing the same challenges as I did,” Emma said.

Emma believes that the past does not define her and the same applies to anyone

suffering from Substance Use Disorder. She wants others to see that there is hope, help, and support for them too, and they can get through the challenges, even past legal problems. Everyone can recover with the appropriate support and care. Patients are often more successful in programs like Shepherd Hill, where a well-rounded set of services to support recovery is offered, compared to programs with limited treatment options that focus primarily on medication.

**Emma is not the patient's real name.*

Behavioral Health Care – *How do we compare?*

At Licking Memorial Health Systems (LMHS), we take pride in the care we provide. To monitor the quality of that care, we track specific quality measures and compare to benchmark measures. Then, we publish the information so you can draw your own conclusions regarding your healthcare choices.

- Behavioral health is a broad term that refers to psychiatric illnesses and/or substance use disorders. 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 the Shepherd Hill facility. One goal is to transition patients into outpatient settings where they can continue treatment, decreasing the need for readmission.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	National ⁽¹⁾
Behavioral Health patients readmitted within 7 days	2.4%	1.9%	2.1%	1.5%

- To determine the effectiveness of treatment for behavioral health patients, LMHS collects patient-reported data for up to two years following completion of a patient's treatment programming. Information regarding abstinence one year after completing the program is self-reported by patients.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	Goal
Patients remaining abstinent	92%	91%	92%	greater than 85%
Improvement in quality of relationships	97%	97%	100%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall physical and mental health	93%	100%	96%	greater than 85%
Improvement in overall quality of life	98%	98%	97%	greater than 85%

- Withdrawal management, the safe and medically supervised elimination of addictive substances from the body, is the most intensive care offered for patients with addictive disease. Acute withdrawal symptoms are managed by the use of appropriate medications specific for each patient's situation. The length of stay for detoxification depends upon the drug of choice and the severity of the withdrawal.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	Goal
Average length of stay – alcohol treatment	2.8 days	3.3 days	3.2 days	less than 3 days
Average length of stay – opiate treatment	2.3 days	2.7 days	2.9 days	less than 4 days
Average length of stay – tranquilizer (benzodiazepines) treatment	3.0 days	4.0 days	3.0 days	less than 5 days

- Education is considered an essential component of providing complete behavioral healthcare. A thorough understanding of the diagnosis, the purpose of medications, side effects to medications, and the expected response to treatment leads to decreased relapse and readmission rates and increased long-term compliance with medication.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	Goal
Medication education provided for patients and/or family	98%	99%	100%	greater than 97%

- In mental health, aftercare programs are recommended for patients who have completed intense treatment programs as well as hospitalization. At Shepherd Hill, follow-up appointments are required in order to continue monitoring patients for continued symptoms and medication effectiveness.

	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH 2025	Goal
Aftercare appointment scheduled within 2 weeks of treatment	93%	96%	96%	100%

Data Footnotes:

(1) Comparative data from the Midas Comparative Database.

Check out our Quality Report Cards online at [LMHealth.org](https://www.LMHealth.org).



Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health and Addiction

Mental health and addiction stigma refers to negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that individuals may hold about those who experience mental illness and addiction. Conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance use disorder are common, and many treatments are available to assist in managing these disorders. However, stigma can prevent or delay individuals from seeking medical care or cause them to discontinue treatment. Below are some tips to help reduce mental health and addiction stigma and support those with mental health and addiction conditions.

- **Talk openly about mental health and addiction.** Sharing personal mental health and addiction experiences helps to normalize the topic, and vulnerability can encourage others to feel safe to share their own struggles.
- **Use person-first language.** Placing emphasis on the individual instead of their condition avoids using labels or adjectives to define someone. Say, “a person with substance use disorder” instead of “an addict.”
- **Educate yourself and others.** Respond to misperceptions or negative comments about mental health and addiction conditions by sharing facts and experiences.
- **Avoid stigmatizing terms.** Refrain from using words with negative connotations, such as “crazy,” “insane,” or “junkie.”
- **Offer compassion.** Listen actively without judgement and validate their feelings.
- **Normalize treatment.** Encourage others to view mental illness and addiction as treatable health conditions, similar to physical diseases such as diabetes or cancer.



Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Behavioral Health Care**. You will soon discover why Licking Memorial Health Systems is measurably different ... for your health!

The Quality Report Card is a publication of the LMHS Public Relations Department. Please contact the Public Relations Department at (220) 564-1572 to receive future mailings.

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