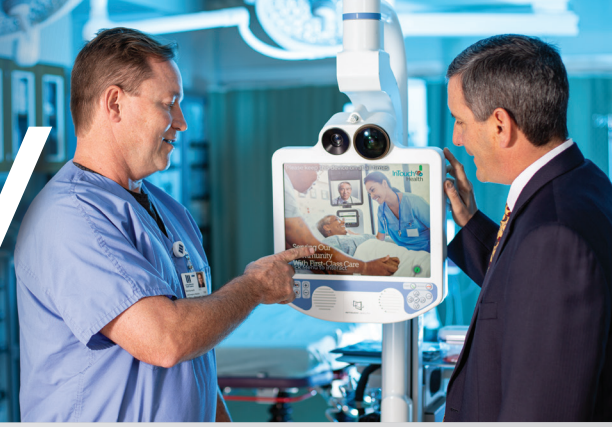


Quality Report Card

Licking Memorial Health Systems



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EMERGENCY CARE

Drug-related Emergency Visits

Drug addiction, overdoses, and the opioid crisis continue to be major issues in the United States. Hospitals and emergency departments (EDs) are on the front lines of these crises and play a key role in fighting substance use disorder (SUD) and overdose, even beyond providing emergency care. In 2021, the top five drugs involved in drug-related ED visits were alcohol, opioids, methamphetamine, marijuana, and cocaine.

An overdose event is an opportunity to introduce interventions that can connect patients with substance use disorders to treatments and other community resources. The Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) ED has adopted strategies for comprehensive care and adheres to evidence-based practices to identify and assist people when they arrive at the ED with a substance use-related condition.

Patients also visit the ED with request for help with detoxification from various drugs. Detox from alcohol and benzodiazepines can be life threatening. ED staff utilize appropriate protocols to treat patients depending on the particular drug from which a patient may be detoxing. Sometimes detox will require admission to the Hospital or a facility that specializes in detox. In other cases, outpatient referrals may be appropriate. ED physicians follow best practice guidance standards for treatment but will consult with addictionologists when needed.

Shame and stigma can be deterrents to people seeking treatment for SUD. It is important for clinical and non-clinical

emergency staff to use non-stigmatizing language when communicating with patients. People-first language respects the worth and dignity of the patient, focuses on the medical nature of the SUD and treatment, and promotes the recovery process. Staff also receive training and education on substance use disorder and overdose that include a wide variety of topics, including fundamentals of addiction and its impact, the basics of medication-assisted treatment (MAT), and best practices for screening and intervention.

When a patient arrives in the ED with a suspected or confirmed drug overdose, the staff conducts an assessment to determine the general well-being and specific needs of the patient. Staff may inquire about general information such as the patient's housing situation, family relationships, mental health conditions, recent changes in life events, employment status, transportation ability, and insurance status. Staff may also ask the patient about their attitude toward their overdose event and how they feel about detoxification or treatment. Based upon the information given, the patient will be provided with a list of referrals to local medical and social services.

The ED utilizes case managers, licensed social workers, and other ED staff to connect overdose patients with resources based on their individual needs. This information includes addiction medicine treatment facilities, mental and behavioral health providers, patient and family support groups, housing assistance, domestic and sexual violence services,

food assistance, employment assistance, and MAT providers.

MAT is the use of medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, which is effective in the treatment of opioid and other SUDs. The medications used are approved by the Food and Drug Administration and help to relieve withdrawal symptoms and psychological cravings that cause chemical imbalances in the body. Medications that may be utilized include Naloxone, buprenorphine, and methadone.

Patients may also be provided with harm reduction resources and education on preventing infectious disease transmission. Harm reduction is an evidence-based approach that emphasizes engaging with people who use drugs and equipping them with life-saving tools and information to create positive change in their lives.

Shepherd Hill is the Behavioral Health Department of LMH. It is a nationally accredited treatment center that focuses on patients with substance use disorders. Shepherd Hill provides care for patients aged 18 and older, including inpatient detoxification services and inpatient psychiatric care for patients needing 24-hour treatment and stabilization. Comprehensive treatment options, including a partial hospitalization program with an overnight component, day and evening intensive outpatient treatment programming, MAT, and an aftercare program, are available for patients with alcohol and/or drug dependence. For more information, call (220) 564-4877 or visit shepherdhill.net.



Patient Story – Poppy Cowles

Poppy Cowles was born and raised in Youngstown, Ohio. She received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree from Youngstown State University and also has a master's degree in nursing education. She has served as a dialysis nurse for 20 years. Working as a traveling nurse, she was offered and accepted a full-time position at a Columbus area hospital in 2019. Poppy moved to Newark to be closer to her new job.

In April 2023, while driving to work, Poppy began experiencing pain and burning in her chest which she thought was heartburn. However, the pain began radiating to her shoulder and back. Since she was still in Newark, Poppy drove herself to the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Emergency Department (ED). As soon as Poppy explained to the registration staff that she was having chest pains, she was taken to a triage room where staff members quickly assessed her condition and then transported her to an exam room.

"From the very beginning of my visit to the ED, the nurses and staff were on top of the situation ensuring my safety and comfort. They listened carefully to my concerns and reacted quickly by ordering the necessary laboratory testing to determine what was causing my pain and offered medications to ease the discomfort," Poppy said. "I explained that I have a shellfish allergy which means being cautious of certain medications and tests."

Staff members monitored Poppy for signs of a possible heart attack. Blood samples were sent to the Licking Memorial Laboratory to test for troponin-I levels. Very high levels of troponin-I are an

indicator that a heart attack has occurred. Troponin-I is a type of protein found in the muscles of the heart, but is not typically found in the blood. When heart muscles become damaged, troponin-I is sent into the bloodstream, and as heart damage increases, greater amounts of troponin-I are released. LMH was the first institution in the United States to offer high sensitivity troponin-I testing. In addition to the lab tests, Poppy also underwent an electrocardiogram (ECG) to record the electrical signal from the heart to monitor for possible heart conditions.

The ED physician determined that the results from both the lab tests and the ECG were abnormal, and that Poppy would require further testing. She was admitted and sent to a Hospital room and told that she would undergo a stress test the following morning. "Again, the nursing staff was very attentive. They took time to talk with me and made me feel comfortable. Many nurses and patient care assistants visited with me, and each one was kind, patient, and caring," Poppy shared.

While in her room, Poppy was visited by a cardiologist who determined that waiting for the stress test was unnecessary since Poppy was still experiencing pain. She was taken to the Heart Catheterization Laboratory where the cardiologist examined her heart function and arteries to determine if there were blockages. During the procedure, Poppy was awake and able to watch the staff perform the procedure.

"It was fascinating to watch the process from the patient's perspective. The nurses were amazing. They were comfortable with one another and laughed together putting me at ease. They talked with me

and kept me occupied which also made me feel that I was in very capable hands," Poppy explained.

After the procedure, Poppy was informed there was no need for more medical intervention with her heart. The cardiologist recommended lifestyle changes instead, such as lowering her cholesterol, to assist in reducing further complications. She was referred to her primary care physician for follow-up care. Just a few days after her experience, Poppy was back at work.

"As a nurse, I greatly appreciated the care I received. I was treated in the same manner in which I would offer care to my own patients, with compassion and consideration," Poppy said. "Being a nurse or a patient care assistant is a difficult vocation. There always seems to be staffing shortages which can leave those in the field overworked and stressed out, but the LMH staff took the time to be attentive to my needs and offer quality care. I was impressed with everyone. I never felt as though someone was too busy to assist me."

Poppy is one of six nurses in her family. Her great grandmother, grandmother, mother, aunt, and sister all share the same love of caring for others. Now that she is back to work, Poppy has been trying to follow the advice given and lower her cholesterol. Her busy schedule often makes it difficult to consume healthy foods, but she has four grown children, and eight grandchildren who motivate her to continue the battle to stay healthy. To relax, Poppy enjoys sewing crafts and gardening.

Emergency 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.

1. During 2022, there were 50,748 visits to the Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) Emergency Department (ED).

	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	Goal
Median length of stay in the ED for all patients*	192 min.	218 min.**	190 min.	Less than 201 min.
Median length of time from arrival until seen by a physician*	16 min.	27 min.**	23 min.	Less than 28 min.
Median length of stay in the ED for patients discharged home*	167 min.	204 min.**	182 min.	204 min.⁽¹⁾
Median length of time from the ED physician's decision to admit a patient until the patient arrives in their Hospital room	98 min.**	75 min.	85 min.	120 min.⁽¹⁾
Percentage of patients who are in the ED for more than 6 hours	4.6%	8.9%**	6.4%	8.1%⁽²⁾

**LMH data represented on this table reflect nearly 100 percent of all ED visits, while goals reference Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services hospital comparative data, which use a small sampling of all U.S. emergency department patients.*

***In 2020 and 2021, admittance times were affected by an increase in patient visits and the need to test patients for COVID-19.*

2. LMH operates three Urgent Care facilities: Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Pataskala, Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Granville, and Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Downtown Newark. Patients are encouraged to visit Urgent Care rather than the ED when they have illnesses and injuries that are not life-threatening, but need immediate attention, such as ear infections, minor fractures, and minor animal bites. Urgent Care visits usually require less time and offer lower costs than visits to the ED. During 2022, there were 19,243 visits to Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Granville, 8,899 visits to Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Pataskala, and 20,486 visits to Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Downtown Newark.

	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	Goal
Urgent Care – Downtown Newark time to see physician	18 min.	44 min.*	39 min.	Less than 30 min.
Urgent Care – Downtown Newark median length of stay	54 min.*	68 min.*	57 min.	Less than 60 min.
Urgent Care – Granville time to see physician	12 min.	30 min.*	29 min.	Less than 30 min.
Urgent Care – Granville median length of stay	41 min.	46 min.*	42 min.	Less than 60 min.
Urgent Care – Pataskala time to see physician	13 min.	31 min.*	30 min.	Less than 30 min.
Urgent Care – Pataskala median length of stay	44 min.	52 min.*	46 min.	Less than 60 min.

**In 2020 and 2021, length of stay times were affected by an increase in patient visits and the need to test patients for COVID-19.*

3. Emergency angioplasty restores blood flow in a blocked heart artery by inserting a catheter with a balloon into the artery to open the vessel. The procedure has been proven to save lives during a heart attack and is most effective when performed within 90 minutes of the patient's arrival to the ED to minimize irreversible damage from the heart attack.

	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	Goal
Median time to opened artery	58 min.	60 min.	53 min.	61 min.
Percentage of patients with arteries opened within 90 minutes	98%	99%	100%	96%
	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	National ⁽¹⁾
Median time from arrival to completion of EKG	3 min.	3 min.	2 min.	7 min.

4. Patients who are seen in the ED and return home sometimes can develop further problems that warrant a return to the ED. A high number of patients who return to the ED within 24 hours after being seen can possibly signal a problem with patient care and the ED's ability to accurately diagnose and treat a patient's condition. For this reason, LMH measures the rate of patients who return to the ED within 24 hours to ensure correct condition management. LMH sets an aggressively stringent goal for this, as listed below.

	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	Goal
ED patients who return to the ED within 24 hours of discharge	1.5%	0.9%	1.2%	Less than 2%

Emergency Care – How do we compare? (continued on back)



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

5. A high rate of patients who return to the Hospital within 72 hours after an ED visit and are admitted can possibly signal a problem with patient care. These cases are very heavily reviewed and scrutinized, and LMH sets an aggressively stringent goal for this indicator, as listed below.

	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	Goal
Patients admitted to the Hospital within 72 hours of ED visit	0.6%	0.4%	0.8%	Less than 1%

6. For personal reasons, some patients may elect to leave the ED prior to completing any recommended treatment. Doing so can place the patient at serious health risk. As a measure of ensuring patient safety, LMH measures the percentage of patients who elect to leave the ED prior to completing their treatment.

	LMH 2020	LMH 2021	LMH 2022	Goal
ED patients who leave before treatment is complete	3.6%	2.2%	1.4%	Less than 3%

Data Footnotes: (1) [Hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](https://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov) national benchmarks. (2) Comparative data from the Midas Comparative Database. *LMH data represented on this table reflects nearly 100% of all ED visits, while goals reference CMS hospital comparative data, which uses a small sampling of all U.S. emergency department patients.

Urgent Care or ED?

Recognizing the difference between emergency and urgent care can be difficult, as both terms suggest that medical care needs to happen quickly. The Emergency Department (ED) at Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) is open 24 hours for patients who have serious or life-threatening injuries and illnesses. LMH also operates three Urgent Care facilities, in Pataskala, Granville, and Downtown Newark, for patients who have minor symptoms but still need immediate care. Wait times in the ED can be lengthy for patients with minor symptoms since the staff must treat patients according to the severity of their conditions. Therefore, patients with minor symptoms may find shorter wait times, as well as lower costs, at one of the Urgent Care facilities.

Commonly treated conditions at an LMH Urgent Care facility include:

- Sore throat
- Ear infections

- Colds, flu, and coughing
- Minor fever
- Minor allergies
- Sprains
- Minor fractures
- Minor cuts needing stitches
- Minor animal bites
- Insect stings (no allergy)
- Minor burns
- Urinary tract infections
- Nausea (not persistent)
- Diarrhea
- Skin rashes
- Minor eye injuries

Examples of serious or life-threatening conditions that require immediate treatment in an ED include:

- Heavy bleeding
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe head injuries
- Stroke-like symptoms (facial drooping or one-sided weakness)
- Chest pain

- Severe dizziness
- Seizures
- Severe injury or bone fractures with open or noted deformity
- Poisoning
- Drug overdose

Visit [LMHealth.org](https://www.LMHealth.org) and click on the “Schedule an Urgent Care Visit” button to view Urgent Care wait times and schedule an appointment.

Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Pataskala is located at One Healthy Place, off State Route 16, on the east side of Pataskala.

Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Granville is located at 14 Westgate Drive.

Licking Memorial Urgent Care – Downtown Newark is located at 20 West Locust Street.



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Visit us at [LMHealth.org](https://www.LMHealth.org).

Please take a few minutes to read this month’s report on **Emergency Care**. You’ll 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) 564-1561 to receive future mailings.

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