

Licking Memorial Health Systems Quality Report Card

Volume 26, Issue 5

MAY 2025

RESPIRATORY CARE



Lung Cancer Screening and Prevention

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in men and women in the United States and is the leading cause of cancer deaths. Each year, more people die of lung cancer than of colon, breast, and prostate cancer combined. The rate of new lung cancer cases in Ohio is significantly higher than the national average. In Licking County, lung cancer was the leading cause of cancer incidence, accounting for nearly 16 percent of cancer cases from 2016 to 2020.

Lung cancer is difficult to detect early because most people do not exhibit symptoms until the cancer is at an advanced stage and has spread to other areas of the body. Symptoms that are present in the early stages of lung cancer are often mistaken for other health issues, such as infection or long-term effects from smoking. Symptoms of lung cancer can vary between people and may include coughing that worsens or does not go away, chest pain, shortness of breath, hoarseness, chronic bronchitis, and unexpected weight loss. Regular cancer screenings remain the best tools for early detection and treatment.

Risk factors for lung cancer include smoking, secondhand smoke, exposure to radon and other cancer-causing agents, air pollution, and personal or family history of the disease. Individuals can reduce their risk of lung cancer by quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke. Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer and is estimated to account for approximately 90 percent of all cases. The LMH Tobacco Cessation Program,

Quit for Your Health, is designed to help people stop using tobacco. Using evidence-based techniques, a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, will work with participants to develop a plan that will provide an opportunity to become tobacco-free and reduce the chances of developing cancer. Individuals may enroll in the program through either a physician or self-referral. For more information, call (220) 564-QUIT (7848).

Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Licking County has the highest levels of indoor radon in Ohio. Homes should be tested and treated to reduce radon levels and exposure. Free radon test kits are available and may be ordered online at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) website, ohio.radon.com. The Licking County Health Department (LCHD) recommends that all residents test their homes for radon. LCHD also provides radon education and awareness through a grant from the EPA, administered by ODH. Individuals may call (740) 349-1562 for more information.

Individuals who are concerned about their lung cancer risk should consult with their physician. There are a variety of tests and procedures that are used to diagnose lung cancer. Imaging tests, such as X-ray, computed tomography (CT), and positron emission tomography (PET) scans, can reveal abnormal masses, nodules, and small lesions. A biopsy can also be performed using a bronchoscopy or endobronchial ultrasound (EBUS) procedure.

Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) offers lung cancer screenings using low dose computed tomography (LDCT) scans to individuals who meet certain criteria. The American Cancer Society recommends screening for individuals who are between the ages of 50 and 80, show no signs or symptoms of lung cancer, currently smoke or quit smoking within the last 15 years, and have a tobacco smoking history of at least 20 pack years. A pack-year is the equivalent of smoking one pack of cigarettes, or about 20 cigarettes per day, for one year. The scan takes about five minutes and provides an overview of the lung using the lowest radiation dose possible to detect lung nodules. Nodules are common and most are noncancerous; however, a nodule can represent early lung cancer.

Diagnosing and staging lung cancer requires expertise from a medical specialist and numerous tests. The process can take time, which may cause patients to feel overwhelmed, anxious, and scared. LMH employs a lung cancer nurse navigator to assist in bridging the gap between diagnosis and treatment. The lung cancer nurse navigator is a clinically trained individual responsible for guiding the patient through the cancer care continuum while identifying and addressing any barriers, such as difficulty coordinating care, lack of health insurance coverage, financial challenges, lack of caregiver support, and language barriers.



Patient Story – Russel “Rusty” Rine

Understanding the consequences of smoking, Russel “Rusty” Rine decided he needed to quit so that he could remain healthy for his grandchildren. Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. People who smoke cigarettes are 15 to 30 times more likely to develop lung cancer than those who do not smoke. Quitting smoking lowers the risk of lung cancer and provides many other health benefits, such as a drop in heart rate, improved circulation and lung function, and a decrease in coughing and shortness of breath.

Rusty had been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD is a term which refers to a large group of lung diseases characterized by obstruction of air flow that interferes with normal breathing. Emphysema and chronic bronchitis are the most common conditions that compose COPD and frequently coexist. When air flow is restricted, less oxygen is transported to body tissues. Oxygen, one of the gases found in the air, is vital for the lungs and organs to work properly. COPD is usually caused by cigarette smoking, though long-term exposure to other lung irritants, such as secondhand smoke, can also contribute to COPD.

While there is no cure for COPD, the symptoms can be treated and managed. Despite living in Knox County, Rusty visited Mohammad K. Islam, M.D., of Licking Memorial Pulmonology to

create an action plan for treatment. Dr. Islam strongly encouraged Rusty to quit smoking. Quitting tobacco use can be difficult, and attempts to quit require planning and support. Licking Memorial Hospital (LMH) offers the Quit for Your Health tobacco cessation program that is designed to help individuals stop using tobacco products such as cigarettes, vaping devices, snuff, and chewing tobacco. Certified tobacco treatment specialists use evidence-based techniques to help participants develop a plan that will offer an opportunity to become tobacco free.

Cessation aids used in the program include nicotine replacement therapy, motivational interviewing, self-management education, and relapse prevention strategies. Quit for Your Health counselors work to form a one-on-one relationship with the patient to offer a support system that uses encouragement and accountability, and provides assistance in developing effective coping strategies. Individuals receive a follow-up phone call at 30, 90, and 180 days after completing the program. Rusty worked with Tobacco Treatment Specialist, Nia Spivey.

“Nia was very helpful,” Rusty shared. “She made the program enjoyable and is very kind and understanding. I found that having the cessation aids, especially the lozenges, assisted the most in helping break my smoking habit.”

In addition to tobacco cessation, Rusty participated in pulmonary rehabilitation to improve lung function, reduce symptom severity, and improve his quality of life. Pulmonary rehabilitation is the use of exercise, education, and behavioral intervention to aid in strengthening the lungs, help the patient become more active, and decrease the need for hospital visits.

Pulmonary rehabilitation is recommended for patients with lung disease who experience shortness of

breath frequently and are unable to perform daily activities. The program is conducted in an outpatient setting for 8 to 12 weeks, and techniques learned may be continued by the patient at home. An individual treatment plan will be developed and a multidisciplinary team consisting of respiratory therapists, an exercise physiologist, physician, and dietician will work together to provide the patient with the tools necessary to manage symptoms effectively and improve quality of life. The pulmonary rehabilitation program can instruct patients on how to:

- Control symptoms
- Manage respiratory medications to treat lung conditions
- Make healthy food choices to manage weight and diet
- Perform various exercises to improve lung function and increase physical abilities
- Cope mentally and emotionally with a chronic lung condition

Rusty completed the rehabilitation program and the three month Quit for Your Health Program. Nia now calls him every month to follow up on his progress. Before Quit for Your Health, Rusty smoked two packs of cigarettes a day. He has been tobacco-free for nearly 8 months. Since quitting, he and his wife, Joyce, celebrated 54 years of marriage. He is enjoying his time with Joyce, their three adult children, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Participation in the Quit for Your Health program is free for Licking County residents by self-enrollment or physician referral. Smokers who wish to quit can ask their primary care physician for more information or call (220) 564-QUIT (7448). Individuals who want to learn more about the Pulmonology Rehabilitation program may contact Licking Memorial Pulmonology at (220) 564-1805.

Respiratory 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. Tobacco use has been linked to many serious and life-threatening conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, cardiopulmonary disease, and diabetes. An estimated 21 percent of Licking County adults smoke.⁽¹⁾ LMHS offers free Quit For Your Health tobacco cessation education, counseling, and nicotine-replacement products. A similar program, Quit for You, Quit for Your Baby, adds incentives to help pregnant women stop using tobacco products. In 2024, 1,615 patients visited one of LMHS tobacco cessation programs.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal ⁽²⁾
Six-month success rate for patients who completed Quit for Your Health ⁽²⁾	95%	90%	92%	70%

2. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a serious, progressive lung condition that includes two life-threatening diagnoses, chronic bronchitis and emphysema. According to the American Lung Association, COPD is the third leading cause of death in the U.S. There is no cure for COPD, and patients will progress to more serious respiratory compromise over time; however, with careful management, patients can enjoy longer and healthier lives. An admission to the hospital for a COPD patient typically means that their chronic respiratory issues have exacerbated to an immediate, acute condition requiring hospitalization. To monitor the quality of a COPD patient's care, the Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services tracks the death rate nationally for patients who die from COPD within 30 days of hospital admission.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	National ⁽³⁾
Mortality rate of COPD patients within 30 days of hospital admission	7.5%	8.3%	9.8%	9.4%

3. Protecting patients from hospital-acquired infections is a primary patient safety goal. LMH has many ongoing programs and safety mechanisms in place to help prevent patient infections. In accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, LMH monitors patients who are at high risk for infections, including those using invasive devices, such as ventilators (breathing machines). The following data reflect the rate of respiratory infections associated with ventilator use, per every 1,000 patient days.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Pneumonia infection rate of Intensive Care Unit patients on ventilators per 1,000 ventilator days	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

4. Some pneumonia patients who are hospitalized require treatment with a ventilator to assist their breathing. Although the ventilator can be life-saving, it carries the risk of serious complications, such as infections, stomach ulcers, blood clots, and extended dependency on the ventilator. To help prevent complications, LMH staff members follow a best-practices protocol for patients on ventilators. Known as the "ventilator bundle," these five steps are carefully documented to ensure each patient receives the best possible care.

	LMH 2022	LMH 2023	LMH 2024	LMH Goal
Head of bed elevated to 30 degrees	100%	100%	100%	greater than 90%
Oral care	100%	100%	100%	greater than 90%
Daily test to reduce sedation	100%	100%	100%	greater than 90%
Stomach ulcer prevention	100%	100%	100%	greater than 90%
Blood clot prevention	100%	100%	100%	greater than 90%

5. LMHS is committed to providing and encouraging free, easily accessible vaccines to all employees. In order to provide the safest care to our community, LMHS recognizes the importance of keeping the staff healthy.

	LMHS 2022	LMHS 2023	LMHS 2024	LMH Goal	National ⁽³⁾
LMHS employees receiving the influenza vaccine	84%	83%	85%	greater than 90%	80%

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



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

6. Licking Memorial Health Professionals (LMHP) office patients who are at high risk for these illnesses also are screened and vaccinated as appropriate. LMHP physicians strongly encourage patients over the age of 65 years to receive a one-time dose of pneumonia vaccine and an annual influenza vaccine during each “flu season,” which runs from October to March.

	LMHP 2022	LMHP 2023	LMHP 2024	National ⁽⁴⁾
Physician office patients over 65 years receiving the pneumonia vaccine	72%	75%	75%	73%
	LMHP 2021-2022	LMHP 2022-2023	LMHP 2023-2024	National ⁽⁴⁾
Physician office patients over 65 years receiving the influenza vaccine	65%	57%	53%	69.7%

Data Footnotes:

- (1) 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment.
(2) Tobacco-free status is self-reported by patients in a six-month follow-up after completing the Quit for Your Health program.
(3) HospitalCompare.hhs.gov national benchmarks
(4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/> [2019 BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data].

Improve Indoor Air Quality for Better Respiratory Health

Poor air quality indoors can pose a significant risk to respiratory health. Enclosed areas can hold concentrated amounts of pollutants such as dust, allergens, and mold spores. Inhaling these contaminants can irritate the airways, inflame the lungs, and exacerbate existing respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Improving indoor air quality is necessary for reducing respiratory symptoms. The following tips can help people create a healthier indoor environment and enhance respiratory health.

- Opening windows can significantly improve air circulation and provide better ventilation; however, it is important to be mindful of outdoor air quality. Avoid opening windows during times of high pollen or pollution.

- Using exhaust fans in kitchens and bathrooms helps to remove moisture and cooking odors.
- Regularly maintain heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in the home, and replace air filters consistently, usually every one to three months.
- Reduce dust and allergens in the home by dusting and vacuuming regularly. Using air purifiers that contain HEPA filters can also remove airborne particles such as dust, pollen, and pet dander.
- Manage mold by controlling humidity in the home, ideally maintaining humidity levels between 30 and 50 percent. In damp areas such

- as basements and crawl spaces, a dehumidifier can be used.
- Refrain from smoking indoors and avoid burning wood in fireplaces or wood stoves when possible.
- Pets should be bathed regularly to reduce pet dander. Keeping pets out of bedrooms can also help to reduce respiratory symptoms.



Licking Memorial Health Systems
1320 West Main Street
Newark, Ohio 43055

Please take a few minutes to read this month's report on **Respiratory 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.

The articles contained in this publication should not be considered specific medical advice as each individual circumstance is different. Should you need medical advice, consult your physician. Entire publication copyrighted 2025 Licking Memorial Health Systems. All rights reserved.