

Lourdes Achieves National Recognition in Groundbreaking Study



Lourdes has been recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as the top performer among 270 participating hospitals in a nation-wide study for treatment of heart failure. "Providing quality patient care has always been our primary mission, and we welcome the challenge to strive for even higher levels of quality according to national standards," said Dr. William G. Wheeler, Lourdes President and CEO. "We volunteered to take part in this groundbreaking study because it was designed to improve quality care. No matter how well we do, we will never stop trying to do better."

The Hospital Quality Incentive Demonstration, or HQID, is being conducted by the CMS and Premier, Inc., an alliance of 1,500 not-for-profit hospitals. Participation in the demonstration project is voluntary.

Patient outcomes are tracked at each participating hospital to evaluate whether the care provided consistently meets accepted evidence-based practice standards. These standards have been proven to lead to better patient outcomes and to reduce the risks of complications and death. Evidence-based medicine integrates best research evidence with clinical expertise.

In addition to recognition as the nation's leader in treatment of heart failure, Lourdes ranked in the top 10% for treatment of pneumonia and the top 20% for treatment of acute myocardial infarction (heart attack).

"Lourdes' recognition by Medicare is external validation of our commitment to quality and patient safety," said Dr. Tim Ranval, Chairman of the Lourdes Medical Quality Care Council. "These initiatives have been championed by Dr. Wheeler, the Executive Team, medical staff and hospital staff. We aren't saying we're the best, Medicare is."

The Medical Quality Care Council, a committee of physicians, nurses and administration representatives, participates in multiple quality projects.

Specific measurements were utilized to analyze patient outcomes data in each hospital in a standardized way. For example, heart failure treatment was evaluated by assessing four measures of care. The appropriate use of medications, function of the heart, smoking cessation counseling and discharge education to the patient and family were included. Education emphasizes medication usage, diet, weight monitoring, follow up and activity.

Lourdes cardiologist Dr. David Hogancamp remarked, "The announcement of national recognition for quality is significant to the citizens of our region. The best care is right here at home."

"The recognition is tremendous because it is a measurement of our emphasis on quality," said Dr. Kyle Turnbo. "But the recognition is a reflection of something else we all see every day, the results of our commitment as a team to improving quality of life."

The demonstration project was designed to explore ways to define quality standards, measure actual performance, and reward top-performing hospitals. Medicare plans to offer financial incentives to participating hospitals that score in the top 20 percent.

Project results are reported on an annual basis. The first year's data was released in November 2005.