

“Metrics that Matter”:

Quality Initiatives at Lourdes

Healthcare providers have always been concerned with the twin issues of quality and safety. In recent years, however, there has been a shift in public awareness on this subject. The rising cost of health care, influence of the Internet and calls for greater transparency have conspired to bring quality to the forefront. Today, lawmakers, regulatory agencies, public and private third-party payers look to quality and safety concerns as a way to reduce error, improve efficiency and drive down cost.

At the same time, the proliferation of organizations requesting and reporting healthcare data has made quality a more difficult topic to manage (see chart). While many agree that public reporting is important, it is difficult to keep track and make improvements when no one is working from the same set of guidelines.

In the Lourdes Health System, hospital administration, physicians and nursing staff work as teams to address performance at every level of the organization. According to **Eugene Johnson**, Chief Administrative Officer at Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County, there is an intense focus on “actionable information.” “It is easy to become distracted by the myriad number of requests for information and data. As an organization, we have determined our priorities and are focused on them with a top-down approach and engagement of leadership and associates at every level.”

In addition, Mr. Johnson points out that making priorities and collecting data is but one step in the process. “Sharing data and outcomes with our healthcare providers through regular presentations to staff and department meetings is an important part of the process. We also provide ongoing education on evidence-based practices as well as pre-printed order sets. Our emphasis is on processes that have a direct impact on practice — we are focused on metrics that matter,” he said.

“Today, more people get their health information from the Internet than they do from their family doctors. That is why quality and safety performance measures are critical to the success of any organization,” said **Mark Bateman**, Chief Administrative Officer of Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center. “It surely increases the burden on healthcare providers like ours to provide data. But we see it as a positive that empowers consumers. And with the advent of ‘pay-for-performance,’ it is essential that we be leaders in providing consumers and third-party payers with the information they need to make truly informed decisions,” he added.

Organizations that Provide Data on Healthcare Quality and Safety

Private or Media Organizations:

HealthGrades; U.S. News and World Report; Solucient; Subimo; WebMD/Select Quality Care

Government:

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and states (e.g., New Jersey Department of Health; Pennsylvania Healthcare Cost Containment Council)

Non-profit or Regulatory Agencies:

Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO); Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; Consumers’ Checkbook; state hospital associations (New Jersey Hospital Association Quality Institute)

Employer Groups:

Leapfrog; Bridges to Excellence; individual business coalitions (Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Coalition)

Payers:

Aetna; Blue Cross Blue Shield; Cigna; Humana

Hospital Quality Ratings Web Sites

CMS: www.hospitalcompare.gov

JCAHO: www.qualitycheck.org

HealthGrades: www.healthgrades.com

NJ Department of Health: web.doh.state.nj.us/hpr/

If you’d like to learn more information about quality and safety initiatives at Lourdes Health System, contact Carol Lynn Daly, Marketing Director, at 856-482-4968, or dalyc@lourdesnet.org.