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Consistent results

Hospitals of all sizes repeatedly score well on patient survey

by Robert Powell



Riverside Doctors' Hospital received the highest survey ratings among Virginia hospitals.

Several Virginia hospitals — large and small — consistently receive high marks in a national **patient satisfaction survey**.

The scores come from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems conducted annually by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The 2017 survey results

shown on Pages 48-49 are provided by Virginia Health Information, a nonprofit organization offering a wide range of data on hospitals, nursing facilities, physicians and health insurers in the commonwealth.

In addition to the patient satisfaction survey, VHI annually provides Virginia Business **service line reports** showing patient discharge volume by region for a wide variety of hospital procedures.

The satisfaction survey asks patients two questions: How do they rate their hospital stay overall and would they recommend the facility to others?

The highest rating in answer to the first question is: “9 or 10” on a 10-point scale. The highest recommendation in response to the second: “Yes, definitely.”

In answering both questions in 2017, 80 percent or more of respondents gave top ratings to eight Virginia hospitals: Carilion Giles Community, Inova Fairfax, Inova Fair Oaks, Novant UVA Haymarket, Riverside Doctors' Hospital Williamsburg, Sentara Leigh, Sentara Princess Anne and Virginia Hospital Center.

By comparison, the average percentages for top rating for Virginia hospitals in 2017 were 72 percent for the first question and 70 percent for the second. The national averages are slightly higher, 73 and 72 percent, respectively.

Seven of the top eight Virginia hospitals in 2017 were high scorers in the 2016 survey, and five of them got top ratings in 2015.

The number of licensed beds in the group ranges from 25 to 894, and two of them, Riverside and Haymarket, opened in the past five years.

“Regardless of the size, location or the age of their facilities, achieving consistently high patient satisfaction ratings requires a broad and ongoing commitment to quality from a hospital's C suite, clinicians, housekeeping staff and all in between,” says Michael Lundberg, VHI's executive director.

“These satisfaction ratings are comprehensive and provide consumers with key insights into the care Virginia hospitals provide.”

The service line reports on Pages 51-57 show consumers which hospitals are the market leaders in their regions in terms of patient discharges for a variety of procedures. Lundberg offers suggestions on additional information patients might seek in deciding where they want to be treated.

“First of all, talk with your doctor or other health-care provider about your options, wants and needs. Understand that not all hospitals offer the same types of care. This is especially true if you need a very specialized surgery or treatment that few hospitals may provide,” he says, citing examples such as bone-marrow, heart, kidney, lung and pancreas transplants, brain surgery and specialized radiation care among many others. “Knowing how often these services are performed and the doctors involved is an important consideration as consumers choose where to receive care.”

Medical and surgical care for cardiology (heart care) is one of the top reasons Virginians are hospitalized, Lundberg notes. “Some hospitals provide cardiac medical care while others also perform open-heart and other cardiac surgery. While how often cardiac care is performed at a hospital is important, mortality rates and hospital readmissions are also key outcome measures of hospital quality.”

Finally, as patients continue to pay an increasingly larger share of the cost of their health care, Lundberg says, finding a cost-effective provider has become a major factor in where to seek non-emergency care.

VHI publishes regional and statewide costs for dozens of services to help consumers compare expected costs. “This information is particularly helpful for patients without insurance that may need a starting point to negotiate an acceptable price with their provider,” Lundberg says.

VHI offers these and other details about Virginia hospitals and other providers at www.vhi.org.

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