







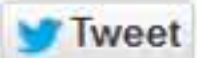


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Virginia Health Information lets you rate your heart doctor, hospital

Free online tool allows comparison of facilities on Peninsula



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By Prue Salasky, psalasky@dailypress.com

6:12 p.m. EDT, March 11, 2014

Fewer Virginians are being admitted to hospitals for cardiac care, but those who are admitted face a stronger likelihood of re-admission within 30 days, according to the recently released Cardiac Care Report from Virginia Health Information.

The VHI, an independent nonprofit, publishes reports and consumer guides on health care prices, insurance, hospitals, physicians, and other health care topics. Its most recent report on **heart disease** tracked figures from 2008 to 2012. Heart disease remains the leading cause of hospitalization and death in Virginia. "It's important for Virginians to have access to information on preventing and treating heart disease," noted Michael T. Lundberg, VHI executive director.

Though both the rates for admission and mortality have dropped statewide, by 14 percent and almost 0.5 percent, respectively, readmissions have increased slightly, from 10.89 percent to 11.25 percent.

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The report gives information for 87 hospitals in Virginia in three categories: non-surgical therapy for heart disease, such as angina, **congestive heart failure** and heart attacks; heart surgeries, including **cardiac catheterization**, pacemakers, balloon angioplasty and cardiac stents; and open **heart surgery**.

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In each category, it enumerates the numbers of patients seen and assigns a "heart" rating, from 1 to 3, of outcomes. Nearly all local facilities received a "2" or "as expected" in the ratings for 2012, with just a couple of exceptions. **Sentara** Williamsburg Regional Medical Center, which had a volume of 804 patients in medical cardiology garnered a top rating of "3" on the mortality grade, meaning it had a "higher than expected" survival rate. Among local hospitals, only **Chesapeake** Regional Medical Center had the lowest grade of "1" in that regard.

Riverside Regional Medical Center in **Newport News**, which treated a relatively high number of patients in each category — 1,614 in non-surgical, 576 in heart surgeries, and 182 in open heart surgery, garnered a "2" or "as expected" rating across the board. However, its readmission rate for its 505 heart failure patients in 2012 received a

"1" or "higher than expected."

Sentara CarePlex in Hampton achieved "as expected" results in the two main categories in which it was rated, with 983 patients in medical cardiology and 360 in invasive cardiology.

To find the full report, go to <http://www.vhi.org/cardiac>, or call 1-877-844-4637.

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