

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VHI Releases Cardiac Care Report: Mortality Rates Decline for 4th Straight Year

Richmond, VA -- Virginia Health Information (VHI) has released its updated Cardiac Care Report, which reveals hospital performance on readmission and mortality rates for common heart care procedures. Heart care remains the number one reason for hospital admissions in Virginia and heart disease is a leading cause of death.

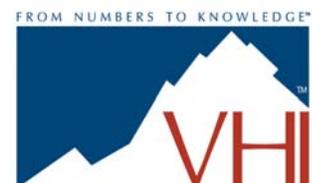
February is "American Heart Month" - a time of increased focus on efforts to encourage Virginians to fight cardiac disease. Reliable comparison data on heart care options such as VHI's Cardiac Care Report can be a valuable tool for patients and caregivers seeking information about their heart care options prior to an emergency or planned medical procedure. "Providing greater transparency on quality of care to consumers is invaluable in helping them make their best treatment choices," said Eric Aldrich, Chair of the American Heart Association's Mid-Atlantic Affiliate Board of Directors. "With cardiovascular diseases being the leading killers of Virginians, choosing the best cardiac care is vital."

The Cardiac Care Report is a free, online, searchable tool that can be used to compare four years of data on mortality and readmission rates for 88 Virginia hospitals in the following categories of care:

- Medical Cardiology: Non-surgical therapy for heart disease such as angina, congestive heart failure and acute myocardial infarction (AMI)
- Invasive Cardiology: Surgeries include cardiac catheterization, cardiac pacemaker insertion, balloon angioplasty and placement of cardiac stents and

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- Open Heart Surgery: Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery and cardiac valve operations

The report also contains statewide summaries, which provide detail on heart care by age, race and gender. For example, readmission rates for open heart surgery declined .44 percentage points for females, and 1.09 percentage points for males between 2007 and 2008. However, mortality rates for African-Americans climbed by 1.02 percentage points during the same time period.

"This type of information holds great value for the individual trying to compare their personal care options, as well as for the public health planner or hospital administrator trying to target prevention programs," said Michael Lundberg, Executive Director of VHI.

In addition to hospital comparisons on mortality and readmission rates, the Cardiac Care Report contains a searchable database of physicians and information on heart attack warning signs and prevention.

Virginia Health Information (VHI) is the nonprofit organization that businesses, consumers, the Commonwealth of Virginia and health insurance companies come to for health information. For those without Internet access call 1-877-VHI-INFO to receive information by mail. VHI publishes reports and consumer guides on health insurance, hospitals, HMOs, nursing facilities, physicians and other topics at www.vhi.org/cardiac.

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