

Hospital response to CR's questions

UF Health Jacksonville

1) Are there specific reasons that your infection rates were higher than average during the time period of Oct 2013- Sept 2014?

We believe the data used in the report on hospital acquired infections was affected in part by the implementation of our electronic medical record system and resulting failure to capture within the new system patient conditions that were present upon admission. We have retrained clinicians as to the appropriate way to document these issues and have significantly improved their capture rate. In other words, what this means is we now have a more accurate accounting of what possible issues patients present upon admission.

In addition, your original report pointed out a very important factor that affects our ratings as compared to other organizations. We are a teaching hospital situated in a large, urban area and therefore our patient population is more complex as compared to most other hospitals, and those factors affect ratings such as yours. Our patients may not have the same advantages as other populations before, during and after their treatment here and, even though we treat each patient with the most competent and thorough care possible, their outcomes can be affected by factors beyond our control.

2) Do you have an antibiotic stewardship program?

Yes, we have an active antibiotic stewardship program. Operating for several years, this collaboration of physicians, pharmacists and infection control professionals works together with authority to identify the right antibiotics, for the right patients at the right time. The result is best practice for antibiotic administration, reduction in resistance, and better outcomes.

3) Do you have a specific program on infection control?

Yes, we have a robust infection prevention and control program. A physician trained in infectious disease leads the program. There are five employees dedicated to the program. All of the staff are required to be certified in Infection Control as quickly as possible but within a few years after hire. These staff round regularly in the organization to insure that best practices for preventing and controlling infections are being utilized. A multidisciplinary Infection Control Committee meets regularly. This team reviews data related to infections and data related to compliance with processes developed to prevent infection. The team reviews and develops evidence-based policies and identifies training needs for the organization related to infection prevention.

4) Have you made any changes since the period covered in the ratings?

Yes, there were several efforts already underway when the data was reported but we have also launched several new quality improvement initiatives - including the appointment of a 100% dedicated full-time physician as Chief Quality Officer - that have dramatically improved most of our quality indicators. For example, we have decreased central line infections by 50% in the past six months, decreased the rate of hospital-acquired urinary catheter infections to nearly zero, decreased surgical site infections, now placing us in the top 30% of academic medical centers and improved the survival of patients presenting with the most critical infection (sepsis) to a rate that is among the very best in the country.

We believe the improvements are a direct result of our decision to appoint the new CQO, who oversees teams of physicians, nurses and other caregivers who now review data daily to identify any potential problems in order to address them as quickly as possible.

5) Do you have any additional comments?

UF Health Jacksonville continuously identifies opportunities for improvement and we evaluate our processes to ensure we provide high-quality care in a safe environment. We believe that reports such as the one you released in July are important but are simply a snapshot in time and do not reflect the overall excellent service we provide in challenging circumstances. For example, at almost the same exact time your report came out, we were honored as the No. 2 best hospital in Jacksonville and 12th best in the state by another national publication.

We are northeast Florida's safety-net hospital, and that means our caregivers do amazing work each and every day treating anyone who walks through our doors. We have many of the best doctors and nurses treating some of the sickest patients in the state and we do this very well with efficiency and limited resources. They are dedicated health care providers doing amazing work in extremely challenging circumstances.