

MEDICAL ERRORS

Hospital safety scores posted

Dominican, Watsonville Community rated 'A'

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SANTA CRUZ » Dominican Hospital and Watsonville Community Hospital are among 104 hospitals in California rated "A" by The Leapfrog Group, a nonprofit that bases its safety scores on outcomes along with practices used to prevent errors, injuries and infections.

Leapfrog released scores Wednesday for more than 2,500 general hospitals in the U.S. based on 28 measures.

The goal is to focus attention on preventable medical errors, the third leading cause of death in the U.S. after heart disease and cancer.

A study in the Journal of Patient Safety in September calculated the number of premature

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deaths associated with preventable harm to patients at more than 400,000 per year.

"More hospitals are working harder to create a safe environment, and that's good news for patients," said Leah Binder, Leapfrog's president and chief executive officer.

When Leapfrog launched its safety scores in 2012, Watsonville Community Hospital rated "B" and Dominican rated "A."

This year, Dominican rated better than the average on several measures, with a lower rate of central line bloodstream infections, breathing failure after surgery and wounds split after surgery, but a slightly higher rate of death after surgery for patients with complications.

Dominican scored 27 out of 30 on hand hygiene, 30 out of 35 on medication reconciliation, and 100 out of 100 for assigning critical care specialists to the Intensive Care Unit. Leadership systems rated higher than average, but teamwork training rated lower than the average.

"Patient safety is our driving priority," said Dr. Nanette Mickiewicz, Dominican Hospital president. "The scores released this week are based on data we reported in 2012, and we expect the scores to be even better next year based on our results to date."

She added, "We are always improving by looking for ways to do things better for the patient experience."

Watsonville Community Hospital rated better than average on breathing failure after surgery and wounds split after surgery, but reported a higher rate of accidental cuts or tears. The Intensive Care Unit score signifies progress is needed in staffing by critical care specialists.

The hospital did not report data on central line infections, fatalities after surgery for patients with complications, leadership, medication or hand hy-

SAFETY SCORES

Measure	Dominican	Watsonville
Worst	Average	
Outcomes		
Falls & trauma*	.454	
0	2.005	.48
Surgical patients died after complications*	118.72	
N/A	163.08	113.56
Wounds split open after surgery*	.49	.74
2.73	.96	
Accidental cuts, tears*		
1.90	2.67	4.2
2.00		
Central line infection**		
.47	N/A	2.6
.56		
Procedures		
Computerized physician order entry***	5	
N/A	5	46.25
ICU physician staffing***		
100	5	5
28.19		
Nursing workforce***		
95.24	No report	
0	90.73	
Patient got right antibiotic***	99	99
0	98.49	
Leadership systems****		
111.43	N/A	0
110.42		
Teamwork training*****		
8	N/A	0
34.20		

*Rate per 1,000 patients

** Observed infections divided by expected infections

*** Perfect score is 100

****Perfect score is 120

*****Perfect score is 40

Source: www.hospitalsafetycore.org.

giene.

"Our hospital did not have enough data to be scored in every measure," said spokeswoman Cindy Weigelt. "We are focused on quality and continual improvement through regular meetings to discuss safety and standardized protocols."

For 2012, neither of the two local hospitals had a computerized prescriber order entry system, designed to eliminate potential medication errors and adverse drug reactions.

The system has since been implemented at Dominican Hospital.

Watsonville Community Hospital is investing in electronic medical records, and physicians on the medical staff will begin using computerized order entry this summer, Weigelt said.

Leapfrog did not rate specialty hospitals, such as Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center, which is working to improve the patient experience via employees evaluating current practice using principles developed by Toyota and adapted by the Virginia Mason Medical Center.

Of the 2,523 hospitals, 804 rated "A," 668 "B," 878 "C," 150 "D" and 23 "F." Nearly one-third improved by 10 percent, mostly from hand hygiene, improved staffing, training for nurses and administering correct antibiotics.

In Maine, 74 percent of hospitals rated "A," the most of any state, compared to 41 percent in California and 8 percent in Connecticut.

Last year, Leapfrog released a calculator for employers to figure how much extra they pay as a result of hospital errors, saying even "A" hospitals are not exempt from such costs. The American Hospital Association called the calculator flawed.