

HEALTH SERVICES

All three local hospitals named top performers

Accrediting agency began improvements a decade ago

Hospitals - General
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SANTA CRUZ — All three hospitals in Santa Cruz County were named 2012 top performers by the Joint Commission, earning recognition for using evidence-based clinical processes shown to improve care.

The Joint Commission, which accredits hospitals, awarded the distinction to all three local hospitals.

Watsonville Community Hospital was honored for pneumonia and surgical care, earning recognition for the first time.

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Dominican Hospital, another new top performer, was noted for care of heart attack, heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care.

Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center was noted for surgical care, a top performer in that category in 2010 and 2011.

A total of 1,099 hospitals nationwide earned the distinction of top performer, up from 620 a year ago and 405 in 2011.

Ratings are based on accountability measure data reported during the 2012 calendar year.

The program is designed to serve as an incentive for all hospitals to improve and be the best they can be, according to The Joint Commission, which began this improvement initiative in 2002.

Each measure represents an evidence-based practice, such as giving aspirin at arrival for heart attack patients, giving antibiotics one hour before surgery and providing a home management plan for children with asthma.

Each top performer earned a 95 percent score, providing patients with evidence-based practice 95 times out of 100 opportunities, with at least 30 cases of treatment.

Audra Earle, who joined Watsonville Community Hospital as chief executive officer in March 2012, said the recognition is due to the medical staff, employees and volunteers.

"It's an honor to have the standard of care we provide here recognized on a national level," said Dr. Robert Weber, chief of staff at Watsonville Community Hospital.

Monica Hamilton, Dominican's senior director of quality, credited physicians and hospital staff, saying, "Quality and patient safety are always our top priorities."

Nearly half the hospitals accredited by The Joint Commission have attained

AT A GLANCE

For the complete list, visit www.jointcommission.org/top_performers_on_key_quality_measures

or nearly attained the top performer distinction, noted Dr. Mark Chassin, the agency president and chief executive officer.

"We are approaching a tipping point in hospital quality performance that will directly contribute to better health outcomes for patients," he said.

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