

Hospitals - Area hospitals post infection rates

By JONDI GUMZ

jgumz@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — Dominican Hospital staff, responding to data collected by the state on hospital infection rates, say the numbers show some improvement but there is still work to be done.

"More than anything, the state report tells us that our struggle is vital and difficult and that our continued vigilance is critical to the continued safety of our patients and community," said Ronda Hatcher, a nurse who serves as Dominican's infection control practitioner.

The data posted Friday by the California Department of Public Health represents the second year for the statewide data collection.

One category where local infection rates varied was

bloodstream infections from a "central line," which is used to administer medication.

Watsonville Community Hospital had higher than average central line infections in wards but was at the state average in the critical care unit. Dominican was at the state average for both.

Hatcher said Dominican has emphasized following a set of procedures designed to reduce infections.

That happened 96.9 percent of the time at Dominican and 63 percent of the time at Watsonville during the reporting period from Jan. 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010.

Watsonville Community Hospital's quality officer was not available Friday but spokeswoman Cindy Weigelt said the hospital is committed to patient safety, with monthly education on infection preven-

The California Department of Public Health has posted data on hospital employee vaccination in 2009-10 to monitor hospital efforts to prevent spread of disease.

Vaccination rate

Dominican Hospital	71%	70%
Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center	74%	76%
Watsonville Community Hospital	83%	65%
State average	56%	63%

SOURCE: www.cdph.ca.gov

tion for clinical staff.

The rates at Sutter Maternity & Surgery Center, which does not have an intensive care unit or emergency department, were listed as unstable. Sutter did not comment Friday.

Hospitals also reported on frequency of three "superbugs."

Dominican had one case of staph infection resistant to penicillin, known as MRSA, and 28

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cases of "gut bug" officially known as clostridium difficile.

"I feel our rate compares favorably to other hospitals in the region, and illustrates the struggle we all face in combating this infection," said Dominican's Hatcher. "We are doing a good job with washing our hands and cleaning equipment appropriately as to not spread the organism. Could

we do better? Of course, but we're on the right track."

Watsonville was staph-free and had 15 cases of clostridium.

Sutter was free of both superbugs, and none of the three local hospitals had a case of enterococci resistant to vancomycin.

Consumers Union praised state regulators for posting a broad range of infection data and called the interactive map to compare surgical infection rates "consumer friendly."

The map focused on four types of surgeries, hip and knee replacements, colon surgery and coronary artery bypass graft, performed from April through June. Stanford did 199 hip replacements, with one infection, but the three local hospitals were not listed due to insufficient data.

"This is a new reporting requirement for last year and

apparently we did not have enough data to get a relevant number," Hatcher said.

All three local hospitals exceeded the state average for employee flu vaccinations.

Dominican's employee health manager Mylene Sakamoto said the flu vaccination rate for the 2010-11 was 68 percent, down slightly from the year before.

"We can do better," she said, noting the goal is 90 percent by 2020 so hospital staff is prepared for flu epidemics.

Vaccination is free to Dominican health care personnel, and she plans to offer more clinics to make it more convenient for staff.

The state said hospitals with more than 90 percent of the employees vaccinated had a mandatory participation policy and required unvaccinated employees to wear a mask.