

# LOCAL NEWS

Royal Calkins, city editor, 429-2410  
rcalkins@santa-cruz.com

## Dominican Hospital earns reaccreditation

Hospitals - Dominican Hospital

6-170

By **MARINA MALIKOFF**  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

A survey of Dominican Hospital by a national accreditation group rated the hospital favorably overall but also recommended improvements.

The new evaluation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations gave the hospital 91 points out of a possible 100, qualifying it for reaccreditation.

### SANTA CRUZ

Sixty-three percent of the nation's 633 hospitals surveyed by the commission in 1999 received a score above 90, said commission spokeswoman Janet McIntyre.

An estimated 80 percent received the designation given to Dominican—"accredited with recommendations for improvement"—said McIntyre.

Despite the positive overall mark, the surveyors found the Santa Cruz hospital needed improvements in the areas of patient rights, anesthesia care, medication use, and monitoring of safety plans.

"The examiners were very complimentary

of the delivery of care and process for improvement of care," said Dominican Vice President Lee Vanderpool.

Dominican was evaluated by a physician, a nurse and a commission administrator.

The survey evaluated the hospital in nearly four dozen categories organized under 16 general areas.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the highest possible score, Dominican received mostly 1s. The facility rated highest (either a 1 or 2) in the following areas:

- Patient assessment
- Planning and providing patient care
- Nutrition care
- Operative procedures
- Leadership
- Infection control
- Hospital management
- Staff education and training
- Medical staff organization
- Nursing

The examiners found the hospital somewhat lacking in the following areas:

- Patient rights
- Anesthesia care
- Medication use

### ■ Monitoring safety plans

In each of those areas, the survey team gave Dominican a score of 3 except in medication use, where the score was the lowest, a 5.

Vanderpool said the hospital has improved its performance in the low-scoring areas, in some cases before the survey team completed its four day review last July.

Because the hospital's emergency room staff posted patients' last names on a board at the nurse's station, the surveyor felt privacy rights were being violated.

The hospital challenged the recommendation that names not be posted.

"We feel the ability to accurately and rapidly assure proper patient identification of the patient outweighs the slim possibility of others seeing the patient name on the control board," Vanderpool said.

Vanderpool attributed poor ranking in anesthesia care to language that surveyors found in the hospital's medical staff bylaws, which didn't match the procedure being used in the recovery room.

"While the physician surveyor agreed that our practice excelled, he nevertheless felt he needed to show us out of compliance until we corrected the bylaws," said Vanderpool. The corrections have been made, he said.

Commission officials will not comment on specific findings.

The hospital scored low on medication use because the survey team discovered an unlocked medication cart, Vanderpool said. Since the survey, the hospital has installed self-locking carts, Vanderpool said.

The surveyor also found the hospital did not have an appropriate report on monitoring of its safety plans. The report has since been adequately modified, Vanderpool said.

Dominican also scored somewhat low in pathology and clinical laboratory services, receiving a 2 while 89 percent of hospitals received a 1.

Dominican received an overall score of 87 in 1997 when it was last evaluated by the commission, said Vanderpool.

The survey is available on the Web: [www.jcaho.org](http://www.jcaho.org)