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SAINT MARY'S GUIDE TO OPTIMAL HEALTH

Heart Care
*That's as Good
as Gold*

A Recipe
*for Better
Dining*


Saint Mary's
HOSPITAL

Exceptional care. Every patient. Every day.

A CONSUMER'S
GUIDE TO
Quality Healthcare

At Your Service

When you're staying at a hotel in an unfamiliar place, having a concierge to answer questions and help you with logistics can ease stress. Why should staying in a hospital be any different?

When you or a loved one needs surgery, it can stir up feelings of anxiety. In particular, patients are most apprehensive about waiting for surgery and arriving at the operating room, according to a British study. The study also revealed patients feel most calm about interacting with medical staff.



Kathy Smith

"To help alleviate nervousness, Saint Mary's Hospital's Surgical Concierge Program offers a dedicated concierge to guide patients every step of the way," said Kathy Smith, Director of Same-Day Surgery, Recovery, Endoscopy, and Trauma at Saint Mary's. "The concierge team is also available to answer any questions or concerns patients or family members may have prior to or during their hospital stays."

PEACE OF MIND

Before and after pre-admission testing, a member of the surgical concierge team meets with each patient to gather and confirm personal health information. Patients are given a booklet outlining what they can expect on the day of surgery—complete with pictures of the parking lot, entrance, reception desk, operating and recovery rooms.

"Upon arriving the day of your procedure, the same team member greets you in the main lobby and helps get you settled," Smith said. "Seeing a familiar face brings a human element to the surgical process and helps alleviate fears."



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All in
Good
Taste

Nutrition has increasingly been recognized as an integral part of the healing process, which is why hospitals around the country are making an effort to improve dining services.

Hospitals, including Saint Mary's, are increasingly taking their cues from the restaurant industry in an effort to enhance the service and quality they provide to patients. Sodexo's "Expressly For You—Personal Choice Dining" program has garnered rave reviews from patients at Saint Mary's.

"The food was good," one patient noted in a survey. "My husband is a chef, so please compliment your staff."

Not only are the meals delicious; they are made to order based on each patient's nutritional needs.

"All meals offered to patients meet their dietary needs—low sodium, for example—which are specified by their physicians," said Kathe Chandler, Registered Dietitian and Operations Manager for Food and Nutrition Services at Saint Mary's. "Additionally, patients get to enjoy more upscale, restaurant-like food choices, such as chicken parmesan and beef tips over rice."

PERSONALIZED SERVICE

With a traditional tray service, patients have to choose their meals the day before and often change their minds by the time meals are delivered. Through "Expressly for You," a host visits each patient to explain options and take his or her order approximately two hours before a meal is served.

"The same host who takes a patient's order delivers meals and snacks," Chandler said. "This ensures patients receive personalized, one-on-one contact throughout their hospital stays."



The Gold Standard

in Cardiac Care

There are many indicators of quality in the healthcare industry. When it comes to cardiac quality, the American Heart Association sets the gold standard.

Hospitals nationwide participate in the American Heart Association's Get With The Guidelines® (GWTG) initiative. Designed to educate hospital leaders on best practices for the management of cardiac conditions, the GWTG program offers comprehensive guidance that contributes to positive patient outcomes.

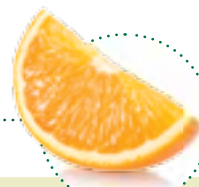
Through the program, heart failure patients not only receive the treatment they need to get better, but also the education they need to stay well. During their hospital stays, patients begin aggressive risk reduction therapies, such as cholesterol-lowering drugs, beta-blockers, and anticoagulants. Prior to discharge, patients also receive counseling for drug and alcohol use, as well as referrals for cardiac rehabilitation.

A SHINING PERFORMANCE

For the third year in a row, Saint Mary's Hospital has received the American Heart Association's Gold Performance Achievement Award for outstanding cardiac care. A select few hospitals in Connecticut have received this recognition, indicating that the facility provides superior care to heart failure patients.



For more information about cardiac care at Saint Mary's, visit www.stmh.org.



The Power of Prevention

Improving heart health begins with significant lifestyle changes. Follow these tips to help reduce the likelihood of heart disease or a heart attack:

You are what you eat. A well-balanced diet containing a variety of fruits and vegetables will provide essential vitamins and nutrients that can improve heart health. Choosing lean meats or fish over red meat, as well as reducing saturated fats, can also boost your health.

Get moving! Thirty minutes of moderate-intensity exercise just a few days a week can help reduce overall weight and cholesterol levels, which are two of the leading risk factors for heart disease and heart attack.



DISTINGUISHED CARDIAC CARE

The BlueCross BlueShield Association has recognized Saint Mary's Hospital as a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care® based on the facility's superior patient outcomes and demonstrated expertise in delivering quality care. As a Blue Distinction Center, Saint Mary's strictly adheres to best practices for cardiac care as determined by the American College of Cardiology and Society of Thoracic Surgeons and continues to seek out ways to enhance cardiac services. Saint Mary's is one of only six hospitals in Connecticut to achieve this distinction.

Shining a Light on Healthcare

Quality

If you think about quality healthcare, a few terms may come to mind—positive outcomes, advanced technology, and superior customer service. While these are all elements of quality, most experts agree that at its core, healthcare quality means consistently providing the **right** care to the **right** person at the **right** time.

Since 2003, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services dedicated to improving healthcare safety and quality, has reported on nationwide quality improvement and opportunities for further enhancing care. Its 2010 National Healthcare Quality Report indicates that while quality is getting better overall, there is still room for improvement.

“High-quality care means that you get all the proper routine screenings you need, like screening for high blood pressure,” said Carolyn Clancy, Director of the AHRQ. “However, it also ensures that you’re not getting tests that you don’t need or that may actually harm you, and high-quality care avoids issues like prescribing medications with dangerous interactions.”

As abstract as the idea of healthcare quality might seem, there are some scientific ways to measure it. Using data from clinical records, administrative codes, and financial transactions, hospitals as well as external organizations can evaluate performance.

HOW DO HOSPITALS STACK UP?

Many independent accrediting organizations such as The Joint Commission, which is considered the leader in developing healthcare quality standards, examine data to evaluate a hospital’s performance and offer suggestions for improvement. When choosing where to receive care, consider whether or not a hospital is accredited by The Joint Commission as a factor in your decision. For residents in the Greater Waterbury area, Saint Mary’s Hospital is a local, Joint Commission-accredited facility.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds Hospital Compare, an online tool that allows consumers to compare hospitals in their areas.

“Because every organization weights elements of quality slightly differently, consider multiple sources to get the most accurate picture of a hospital’s care,” said James Tucker, RN, MBA, Division Director of Clinical Quality at Saint Mary’s. “For example, some organizations emphasize physician opinion, whereas others focus on technological prowess.”

WHAT MATTERS TO ME?

Even if a hospital comes very highly recommended by accrediting and ratings organizations, it’s important to make sure the facility can meet your specific needs. A hospital might receive a superior overall score for healthcare quality, but it may fall short in the specialty you need.

As an example, consider labor and reproductive care, which are the most common healthcare services utilized by women of childbearing age. Childbirth is one of the most significant moments in a family’s life, and if you are pregnant, you’ll want to choose a hospital where you will receive safe, compassionate care from experienced providers.

WORD OF MOUTH

Patient feedback is another important measure of quality, and one that most people already use when choosing a healthcare provider. For example, people often ask friends and family members about their experiences at hospitals or doctors’ offices.

Organizations ask, too. By gathering patient feedback, which can come in a variety of forms—from surveys to written notes and emails—hospitals can hear firsthand from patients about their experiences. To ensure feedback from patients is as honest and impartial as possible, many facilities utilize a third-party survey company, such as HealthStream Research.

*“Our focus
on quality reflects
our organization-wide
commitment to differentiating
Saint Mary’s Hospital based
on demonstrably superior
quality and service.”*

*—Chad W. Wable, President and
Chief Executive Officer,
Saint Mary’s Health System*

“While we focus on ensuring patients receive quality care through follow-up testing and procedures, evaluating patient experience is vital,” said Sandra Roosa, Vice President of Patient Care Services at Saint Mary’s Hospital. “By surveying patients or giving them a variety of ways to communicate critical feedback, we can pinpoint which areas of care need extra focus and attention.”

MAKING STRIDES

To improve care, Saint Mary’s and other hospitals around the country have adopted numerous quality initiatives that have benefited patients in several ways. According to BlueCross BlueShield Association’s 2010 *Healthcare Trends in America* reference guide:

- The percentage of patients receiving evidence-based care for heart failure, pneumonia, and heart attacks has significantly increased.
- Quality initiatives, such as the use of checklists, have resulted in shorter

hospital stays, improved outcomes, and cost savings.

- Patients benefit from well-defined discharge procedures.

“Ensuring patients receive high-quality care is a process that encompasses the whole staff’s involvement,” Tucker said. “Whether a patient is being greeted by registration, having a pre-admission screening or follow-up procedure, it’s our goal to closely follow best practices and clinical measures while effectively communicating with patients.”



*To learn more about Saint Mary’s
commitment to quality,
visit www.stmh.org.*

It’s All About YOU

In addition to exceptional clinical outcomes, Saint Mary’s Hospital believes customer service is a key component of healthcare quality. When you come to our hospital, we want to make the experience as comfortable as possible. That’s why we’re at your service, offering convenient, complimentary services such as:

- + concierge service
- + massages for new moms
- + free valet parking
- + support groups

Enhancing Patient Safety

The healthcare industry as a whole is shifting to the use of electronic health records, but what does this technology mean for patients?

Over the last decade or so, physicians, hospital decision makers, and legislators have come to see the value of electronic health records (EHRs) as a means to improve patient safety. In 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act established financial incentives to encourage hospitals and practices to implement EHRs. With government funding and health systems reevaluating patient safety, more healthcare organizations—including Saint Mary's Hospital—have embraced EHRs.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

With an EHR, a patient's medical history—including immunizations, current medications, and allergies—is stored electronically, making it easy to access and navigate, unlike traditional paper records.

"Having a patient's real-time medical history available in a matter of seconds enables providers to make better decisions about his or her care," said Carolyn Orrell, Chief Information Officer at Saint Mary's. "This technology expedites treatment and decreases the likelihood of performing duplicate tests."

EHRs do more than enhance healthcare quality and patient safety in the hospital setting. When a patient follows up with his or her regular provider or a specialist, that physician can receive the patient's EHR in a secure format. This portability allows providers across the care continuum to make well-informed decisions about their patients' care.

KEYED FOR SUCCESS

Another significant feature of an EHR system is computerized physician order

Many people think of electronic health records as a technology project, but it is ultimately about improving patient care and safety.

—Dr. Joseph DeMayo, internal medicine physician at Saint Mary's Hospital

entry (CPOE), which allows physicians, nurses, and other providers to place orders for lab work, imaging, medications, and more electronically. Built-in alerts notify clinicians if there is a medication conflict due to allergies or another prescription.

"As most patients have probably seen, physicians do not always have the neatest handwriting, but CPOE eliminates illegible handwriting and transcription errors," Orrell said. "With CPOE, there is no confusion about what an order says."

RAISING THE BAR(CODE)

Another component of the EHR system at Saint Mary's that helps improve patient safety is bedside administration of medication. At the bedside, nursing staff utilize mobile medication carts to scan the patient's wristband and individual pills—not just prescription bottles—to ensure the five "rights" of patient medication safety:

1. Right patient
2. Right medication
3. Right dose
4. Right time
5. Right route

To make sure the implementation of the EHR system at Saint Mary's was successful, all providers completed rigorous Web-based and hands-on training. Through teamwork, training, and communication, the EHR system is positively impacting the lives of patients.



To learn about upcoming projects at Saint Mary's, including patient portals that will allow patients to be more involved in their healthcare, visit www.stmh.org.

Michelle Godin, RN, EdD, Nursing Administration, talks with Ray Desrochers, RN, about bedside computer systems that were introduced in early 2011 as part of Saint Mary's Hospital's electronic health record system.



Getting a Handle on Quality

Q&A

Thrive sat down with three quality experts at Saint Mary's Hospital to ask what quality means to them.



Dr. David Roer,
Medical Director
of Clinical Quality,
Saint Mary's



James Tucker, RN,
MBA, Division Director
of Clinical Quality,
Saint Mary's



Stephen R. Griffin,
Vice-Chair of the Quality
and Patient Safety
Committee, Saint Mary's

Question: What is quality healthcare?

Dr. Roer: The Institute of Medicine defines quality healthcare this way: 'Quality of care is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.' There also is a great quote from Dr. Francis Peabody, who said, "The secret of the care of the patient is in caring for the patient.' Therefore, to me, high-quality care is patient-centered care and providing a safe and efficient environment to achieve the best outcomes.

Question: What is Saint Mary's doing to implement quality standards, in practical terms?

Dr. Roer: There are a number of methods and techniques that are used to measure patient safety and quality, including multidisciplinary rounds. Everyone who is involved in the care of patients participates in these weekly rounds to evaluate the quality of care patients are receiving in real time.

Question: What is quality healthcare?

Tucker: Real quality begins with ensuring that staff and physicians are excellent at what they do all the time. Furthermore, exceptional care is reached when superior clinical care is combined with high-quality service. The result should be a safe, healing environment where staff really care for the patients they serve.

Question: What is Saint Mary's doing to implement quality standards, in practical terms?

Tucker: Saint Mary's has had perfect performance in key cardiac care measures for more than two years. We review every heart attack case to be sure each patient is receiving appropriate testing and proper medication. As a result, the 30-day mortality rate among heart attack patients cared for by Saint Mary's is significantly lower than the national average.

Question: What is quality healthcare?

Griffin: Quality means giving the appropriate care at the right time and delivering this care constantly and consistently. From the patient's perspective, quality means being able to trust that doctors, nurses, food service workers, maintenance personnel, and all other staff members they encounter are assisting in their healing and continued wellness.

Question: What is Saint Mary's doing to implement quality standards, in practical terms?

Griffin: Saint Mary's has established the Quality Coordinating Council within the hospital and the Quality and Patient Safety Committee of the Board of Directors. The Board regularly helps measure Saint Mary's performance against accepted indicators of quality, sets annual quality goals, and prioritizes areas that need attention. It should come as no surprise that quality and safety are the highest priority at Saint Mary's.



To learn more about Saint Mary's commitment to quality, visit www.stmhfoundation.org.



Gold medal cardiac care

3 years
in a row!


Saint Mary's
HOSPITAL

Exceptional care. Every patient. Every day.

Recognized for its award-winning cardiac care, Saint Mary's Hospital is committed to providing our patients with exceptional clinical quality and service. Our physicians, nurses and quality improvement professionals have been recognized three years in a row by the American Heart Association — a national leader in the fight against heart disease — for excellence in patient care. But there's more to our story.

Our awards and accomplishments include:

- ▶ Saint Mary's has achieved 100% compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Core Measures for treating heart attack patients.
- ▶ Saint Mary's is achieving door-to-balloon times of under 90 minutes for 100% of our patients, with a median time of 60 minutes.
- ▶ Saint Mary's is one of the select few hospitals in Connecticut to receive multiple American Heart Association Gold Awards for outstanding care of patients with Coronary Artery Disease and Heart Failure.

