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## Hospital patient satisfaction varies statewide

By Tammie Smith | TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

*Some hospitals do better than others, according to a new patient satisfaction report from the nonprofit Virginia Health Information.*

Clean bathrooms, quick response to call buttons and adequate pain control -- these sorts of things can make a hospital stay less of an ordeal.

Some hospitals do better than others, according to a new patient satisfaction report from the nonprofit Virginia Health Information that examines these and other measures.

"About two of three patients would recommend the hospital they visited," said Michael T. Lundberg, executive director of the health information agency, which collects and reports Virginia health data.

But scores varied quite a bit statewide, Lundberg said.

Only 44 percent of the sample of patients at Russell County Medical Center in Lebanon said they would recommend the hospital to family and friends, compared with 84 percent at Winchester Medical Center.

Among Richmond-area hospitals, Bon Secours St. Francis Medical Center in Chesterfield County had the highest general ratings -- 79 percent overall satisfaction and 82 percent of patients saying they would recommend the hospital.

Statewide average for overall satisfaction was 63 percent, while the national average was 66 percent.

The report is based on data collected from a random sample of patients. Hospitals collect that data and report it to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which also uses the data in its Hospital Compare website.

Virginia Health Information's Web format is easier to navigate than Hospital Compare's, and the data is linked to other information on the VHI website on hospital finances, obstetrical-care ratings, and services.

The survey data were collected from October 2008 to September 2009.

Other findings about Richmond-area hospitals in the report include:

**Clean rooms and bathrooms:** Bon Secours Richmond Community Hospital had the highest rating, with 74 percent of patients reporting that rooms and bathrooms were always kept clean, compared with 62 percent at CJW Medical Center.

**Getting help:** Seventy-two percent of patients at Bon Secours Regional Medical Center in Hanover County said they always received help quickly, compared with 50 percent at Southside Regional Medical Center in Petersburg.

**After-care instructions:** Eighty-five percent of patients at VCU Health System said they were given instructions on what to do during recovery at home, compared with 75 percent at HCA's John Randolph Medical Center in Hopewell.

"Our goal is to give patients the best possible clinical outcome, as well as a positive patient experience," said Ann Latstetter, a registered nurse and vice president of quality for HCA Capital Division, which includes CJW Medical Center, Henrico Doctors' Hospital and John Randolph Medical Center.

"We are monitoring these scores as part of our commitment to patient satisfaction and clinical excellence."

Deborah Davis, chief operating officer of MCV Hospitals, part of the VCU Health System, said VCU surveys inpatients, outpatients and emergency-room patients.

"We get reports on a quarterly basis that we then push out to our management team," Davis said. "We use that information . . . to validate how well we're doing or to make any changes that we may need to make in our system to make sure that we're meeting patient expectations."

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