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**Cardiac Hospitalization Readmission Rates Significantly Higher for Women**

*~Findings in Cardiac Care Report released this week by VHI~*

RICHMOND, VA – Dizziness, nausea and achiness – no, these are not symptoms of the flu but signs of a heart attack in females. While heart attacks affect both men and women, the symptoms of a heart attack are surprisingly different between the genders. **Virginia Health Information (VHI)** this week released its Cardiac Care Report which provides consumers information comparing heart healthcare in Virginia. This year’s report reveals women undergoing open heart surgery continued a five year trend of higher than expected readmission rates.

February is “American Heart Month” – a time to raise awareness of cardiac health and focus on efforts to encourage Virginians to prevent cardiac disease. **VHI’s Cardiac Care Report** is a valuable tool for patients and caregivers that can be used to make more informed health care decisions.

The **Cardiac Care Report** is a free, online searchable tool that can be used to compare five years of mortality and readmission rates for 93 Virginia hospitals in the following categories of care:

- ♥ **Medical Cardiology:** Non-surgical therapy for heart disease such as angina, congestive heart failure and acute myocardial infarction (AMI)
- ♥ **Invasive Cardiology:** Surgeries include cardiac catheterization, cardiac pacemaker insertion, balloon angioplasty and placement of cardiac stents and
- ♥ **Open Heart Surgery:** Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery and cardiac valve operations

The report also contains statewide summaries, which provide detail on heart care by age, race, payer and gender.

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**VIRGINIA HEALTH INFORMATION**

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“Statewide, cardiac care patients with Medicare, Medicaid or commercial insurance coverage have mortality rates as you would expect,” said Michael Lundberg, Executive Director of VHI. “On the other hand, Medicare and Medicaid patients have 30-day readmission rates higher than expected. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the federal agency that administers the Medicare program, has recognized the importance of reducing high readmission rates and will provide incentives for hospitals that do so.”

In addition to hospital comparisons on total discharges, mortality and readmission rates, the **Cardiac Care Report** contains a searchable database of physicians and information from the American Heart Association (AHA) on heart attack warning signs and prevention.

**Virginia Health Information (VHI)** is the nonprofit organization that businesses, consumers, the Commonwealth of Virginia and health insurance companies come to for health information. For those without Internet access call 1-877-VHI-INFO to receive information by mail. VHI publishes reports and consumer guides on health insurance, hospitals, HMOs, nursing facilities, physicians and other topics at [www.vhi.org](http://www.vhi.org).

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