

Markham Stouffville Hospital HSMR score shows dramatic improvement

December 10, 2009 – Markham, Ontario – Markham Stouffville Hospital Corporation's latest Hospitalized Standard Mortality Ratio (HSMR) results show a vast improvement over last year's numbers.

Last year, when the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) publicly released MSH's results for the first time, the hospital was one of the worst performers in the province with an overall ratio of 129. Today, that ratio is 86, making it one of the best performers and one of the hospitals with the most significantly improved ratio.

"When we first found out about our score in 2008, we immediately put a number of action steps into place to determine if we had a clinical problem," explains Dr. David Austin, Chief of Staff for Markham Stouffville Hospital. "Fortunately our efforts confirmed that our ratio represented a problem with the way information was captured in our patients' charts and **not** with the quality of care we provide."

HSMR is a measure of patient safety that compares a hospital's mortality rate with the average Canadian rate. It examines observed versus expected deaths and is adjusted for various factors including age, sex, diagnoses and admission status of patients.

A number of factors contributed to the dramatically improved score, including better coding practices and better physician documentation. The hospital also embarked on a number of initiatives to improve patient care, such as implementing intensivists in the ICU, adding hospitalists to staff and implementing the critical care response team. As well, the hospital further strengthened its focus on hand washing, which is known to be one of the most significant factors in reducing infections and the spread of diseases.

The hospital's medical staff was very active in the review process and reviewed every death that had occurred over the past year. Once the problem was determined to be with coding, the hospital ensured there was a strong focus on making sure that physicians and Health Records staff were charting and extracting patient data appropriately and accurately.

"We were very committed to educating our medical staff about the importance of the way information is captured and conducted a chart review for coding and charting with them," says Dr. Austin. "Our ratio this year clearly reflects what we knew all along; that the hospital has always provided exceptional care to our patients."

"As an organization that values quality, we welcome the opportunity to continually improve upon the care we provide to our patients," says Janet Beed, President and CEO of Markham Stouffville Hospital. "I am very proud of the work our medical staff has done to demonstrate that our care has always been excellent and now our ratio accurately reflects that as well."

For more information about Markham Stouffville Hospital's HSMR score, visit:
http://www.msh.on.ca/patients_and_visitors/hospital_standardized_mortality_ratio_hsmr

Markham Stouffville Hospital Corporation (MSHC) is a progressive two-site, community hospital with leading diagnostic services and clinical programs in acute care medicine and surgery, addictions and mental health, and maternal and child health; all focused on the needs of our rapidly growing communities. Partnering with other specialist providers, the Hospital's 275 physicians and 1,700 staff make it the centre of community care for the residents of the Towns of Markham, Stouffville and Uxbridge – a population of nearly 300,000 people.

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