

## RMCHCS discusses treatment, output of patients

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 06 March 2020 11:09

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### Figures from survey not the whole story

Early in February, *Becker's Hospital Review* published an article listing 11 hospitals in the United States with the highest percentage of patients who were unhappy with how their physicians interacted with them.

This list was based on the most recent Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems survey scores, which were based on data from April 2018 to March 2019.

The survey is administered to a random sample of patients throughout the year, and asks 29 questions about topics including critical aspects of the hospital experience, screening questions, and demographic questions for adjusting the mix of patients across hospitals. Specific topics include doctor and nurse communication, manner of the hospital staff, communication about medication, and the state of the hospital environment.

About 12 percent of patients at each hospital stated their physician “sometimes” or “never” treats them with respect.

Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services was one of the hospitals on the list, but Dr.

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Valory Wangler, chief medical officer, spoke with the *Sun* Feb. 26 to give more insight about the survey data.

“Most of the patient satisfaction data we get comes from a particular survey that’s sent out by a national company and asks a variety of questions,” Wangler said. “We are committed to making sure our patients feel listened to, and their needs are met.”

Wangler said they have had two notable problems with the survey and data in the past.

“One issue is it’s geared for your average hospital, which is 200-300 beds, 50 people being admitted or discharged in a day,” Wangler said. “If you send out surveys, you get between 100, 200 responses a month.”

The size of RMCHCS compared to other local hospitals can influence the number of patients who receive the survey, Wangler said.

“We don’t tend to get very many responses back,” she added. “If we have a small sample size, or people don’t respond, and if one or two patients have a bad experience, that has a huge impact on our numbers.”

The other major issue is the company using data from about a year prior, which makes it difficult to identify any potential problems.

Wangler said the hospital’s chief nursing officer has worked to develop a customer service campaign to ensure the hospital staff keeps communication with their patients in mind, in addition to providing effective medical care.

“We have to make sure the [physicians] are engaged in the communication,” Wangler said.

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While one or two negative comments could significantly affect the hospital's score, Wangler said the positive feedback they have received from patients seems to be brushed aside.

Another factor in the negative comments about a lack of communication could stem from the number of external physicians RMCHCS has hired in the past year, Wangler added.

"When you don't live in the community, sometimes you forget the customer service aspect," Wangler said. "When we have that, and people realize they're taking care of their community members, they want to be sure they're being kind and respectful."

This is why Wangler said she thinks the scores will look better by next year. She also said the data used for the article is not great data because of the time gap between the survey and the article's publication, and no specific figures being provided in the article.

Still, Wangler said the hospital is keen to get feedback and implement it in future work.

"Anything we can improve, we want to do," she said.

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