Report Says New Jersey is 10th Healthiest State in the Nation

New Jersey is the 10th healthiest state in the nation, according to United Health Foundation's *2013 America's Health Rankings: A Call to Action for Individuals & Their Communities*, which was released today.

According to the report, the Garden State's strengths were in the areas of ready availability of primary care physicians and dentists, low rate of drug deaths and low percentage of children in poverty**.** Challenges included high prevalence of physical inactivity, high prevalence of low birth weight and high rate of preventable hospitalizations.

Nationwide, Americans improved in the majority of the measures captured by the rankings. The most notable gains came in key behavioral measures, including smoking, which dropped from 21.2 percent of the adult population to 19.6 percent. Physical inactivity dropped from 26.2 percent of the adult population to 22.9 percent, and America's obesity rate remained approximately the same as reported in 2012 (27.6 percent of the adult population in 2013 compared with 27.8 percent in 2012).

The national report concluded that when it comes to improving the nation's health, there is still much to be done. Obesity has leveled off; however, it must remain a top priority, as 27.6 percent of adults nationwide report being obese. With rates of physical inactivity, smoking and diabetes at 22.9 percent, 19.6 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively, there is still considerable room for improvement in key health measures, the report states.

Six Ways Hospitals Can Reduce Length of Stays

As hospitals and healthcare systems pinch pennies and look for ways to operate more efficiently, a new report reveals six simple steps they can take to reduce length of stay and increase on-time discharge.

Experts from leading hospitals around the country shared ideas on how to improve patient care, even with limited resources:

1. **Emphasize accurate patient placement following the 5 Rs**: Place the patient in the appropriate sector of care using five guidelines--right level of care, right service, right nursing unit, right bed and right time period.
2. **Initiate daily multidisciplinary rounding and daily bed huddles**: Track patient progress daily so you can complete ancillary tasks on time, such as teaching, patient evaluations, payer authorizations, post-acute service setup and rides home.
3. **Discharge patients as soon as possible**: The entire healthcare team should help patients reach discharge as quickly as is clinically feasible. Some hospital staffs keep patients hospitalized longer than necessary because traditional models call for discharges early in the day, according to the report.
4. **Review your patient census**: Manage elective admissions to stabilize peaks in the patient census and balance them out with the emergency department admissions.
5. **Communicate with staff and patients**: Case management can help play a huge role in streamlining communications between patients and hospital staff and ensuring that patients progress as quickly as possible through care milestones.
6. **Measure and distribute the correct metrics**: Know the average daily admissions, both scheduled and unplanned, in order to appropriately manage capacity. In addition, review data on the number of boarders, diverted patients and denied patients. The report also recommends that staff look at the number of hours admitted patients wait in the emergency department, bed-cleaning turnaround time and avoidable days.

Save the Date

Watch for our 2014 calendar—coming soon!

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