

Katie J.: Good morning and welcome to Apple A Day, Lake Region Healthcare's Health and Wellness Show where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host and my guest today is Abby Drouillard. She's our Director of Quality and has some exciting news that we want to share with our patients and talk a lot about quality and safety and just great experiences when you do need healthcare. Good morning Abby.

Abby: Good morning. Hi Katie. Thanks for having me.

Katie J.: Well thanks for joining me. Like I said, we have some kind of exciting, good news to share with our listeners that Lake Region Health Care, for the second time in a row, has received an A-rating from the Leapfrog Group, and I think we should start out by just explaining what in the world is a Leapfrog Group. That sounds like kind of a strange name, and what does that mean to get an A-rating?

Abby: Yeah, so the Leapfrog Group is a nationwide organization that looks at how organizations fare in things related to healthcare-associated infections, things that tie back to anything patient safety-related. It also looks at how we listen to our patient's voice from our patient experience survey responses. And then, it also looks at how we utilize our electronic health record. So, it kind of encompasses a lot of measures, and then from that result, it just rolls up organizations into a grading scale. So, from A, B, C, D.

Katie J.: And so, kind of like a school report card, A is the best score you can get, and we're very proud of that. Tell me a little bit more about how they collect this data to measure these scores.

Abby: Yeah, so a lot of data ... We submit a lot of data to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. Our healthcare-associated infection data comes from another governmental-driven entity. So, they pull a lot of information from that. And then, we also supply information as far as our patient experience survey responses and scores. And then, just some broad questions on how we use our electronic health record [inaudible 00:01:59].

Katie J.: And when you talk about that patient experience survey, I want to make sure that listeners kind of make the connection. After they've had an experience with us, this is that survey you get in the mail, right?

Abby: It is. So, you can get a survey in the mail. You can get a survey emailed to you. So, we always appreciate your response and your voice and how you felt your experience was here at Lake Region because we do use that in a number of facets in our organization.

Katie J.: And I think it's important to realize that it also reflects on this, that it actually comes out and means something to other people. Your experience can help other people guide their decisions when it comes in the format of a rating like this.

So, how uncommon is it to get an A-rating, especially two times in a row?

Abby: Yeah, so it's pretty uncommon. 33% of organizations in the nation have received an A-rating. Lake Region Healthcare is the only facility within a hundred mile radius that has received an A-rating. So, kudos to our staff and our medical staff and community members that have just made that happen.

Katie J.: Absolutely. And we should clarify that these ratings come out twice a year. So, this is two rating periods in a row, and those numbers reflect the most current rating period.

I'm curious to get your thoughts on why this is important. Why does Lake Region Health Care, why does Leapfrog take the time to submit and analyze all of this data and then publish it in the form of these grades?

Abby: Yeah, quality and safety and initiatives are always a part of what we look at and work on in our organizations. So, that's not a new thing for us. But what is new is just the ability for our patients to do their own research and identify which, either provider or care team or organization, they would like to go to, to receive the best care that they can. So, that is just one opportunity that you, as patients and consumers, can do. You can look up and figure out which place would be the best for you.

Katie J.: Right. I think it kind of, like you said, it's not something new, but it holds healthcare organizations more accountable when patients are able to easily look and see this is a quality organization or oh this one looks like maybe they have some issues. I need to ask some more questions, or I need to be more engaged in proactive.

Like you said, quality healthcare is a standard priority here, but we have some real proactive things, I think, that are in the works that kind of show that we go the extra mile to ensure the highest quality for our patients and staff. And that's kind of what your life is all about. Right? Tell us about what some of those initiatives are.

Abby: Yeah, so a lot of our initiatives are identified through data analysis that we've done. So, a couple of initiatives that we're working on is readmissions. So, patients that leave our inpatient setting and either are discharged home or discharged to an area facility and then coming back to us. So, we want to ... We're trying to expand and make that care transition a little stronger for our patients and their families-

Katie J.: Because as much as we love you, we really don't want you to have to come back, right?

Abby: We don't. We don't. And I think we just want to strengthen that care transition as best we can with both our patients and then that community partner. So, we've had some great discussions with our local community partners to identify what we can improve and what they can do to improve. So, it's just a collaborative look at preventing our readmissions.

Another initiative is opioid safety. You will hear that in the news almost on a daily basis. So, we have begun work greater than a year ago with some grant funding to look at both prescribing practices. We've created a community task force that looks at opioid-

related events or concerns and provide that feedback. So, that's a large initiative that we're working on now as well.

Also, looking at using our patient's voice in a number of things. So, like we had talked about, the patient experience surveys, reviewing those comments, seeing what the trends in the data is showing.

We also have a very active patient and family advisory committee. I think current state is at Eight members. We meet on a monthly basis and just bring things to them, or they offer recommendations or suggestions to how our organization can grow and improve, and then also, we visit, and we round with our patients just in passing in the hall. I know our executive leadership goes and rounds with patients in the hospital, and hearing that voice and your patient's feedback is very helpful as well.

Katie J.: Absolutely. Another big one I know is the Community Health Needs assessment, and that is a project that happens every three years, and we're kind of on the end of the 2019 analysis and getting ready to implement that. That's a really exciting one when you think about the priorities that are identified and then the work that we can put in place to make a difference on what the community health needs are.

Abby: Yeah. So what has been identified with our analysis is looking at community health needs and issues related to mental health, related to substance use, related to just awareness of resources in our community, because our community is saturated with amazing resources for our patients and families and peers. And then also looking at chronic disease management, from diabetes to heart disease to cancer diagnosis, and then also making an effort and looking at social determinants of health from anything from socioeconomic status to do patients have what they need to just have the basic needs of housing and warmth and food. So, it's taking that into account as well.

Katie J.: It's one thing to say that our community is saturated with great healthcare services, but if you can't meet your basic needs, or if you don't know where or how to connect with them, we're certainly underutilizing them. So that's all great.

Our staff and our providers do work hard to partner with patients. You've mentioned that a few times before, to make sure that their health care journey is a team effort, that the outcomes that the patient wants are really what we're working towards. So, with that in mind, what can offer to patients and their families in terms of if you want to have the best possible experience, the safest possible experience when you're coming here for healthcare or anywhere for healthcare for that matter, what can they do?

Abby: Just be engaged in your health care journey. Ask questions to your care team. They're more than willing to share information. Shared decision making is a huge part of our journey and your journey as a healthcare consumer. Involve a support team, and then also be an advocate for yourself. You're the one that knows the most about you. So, just share that information and how your healthcare journey could affect you personally, both in your medical decisions and then in your lifelong decisions.

Katie J.: Absolutely. I think we're maybe on kind of an interesting transition between the generations of expecting the doctor to give you the answers and trusting your healthcare providers that you just listen and do what they say, to being more engaged in asking more questions and realizing how much of a difference that can make. So, I think that's really exciting.

What else would you like our listeners to know about quality and safety efforts here at Lake Region Healthcare?

Abby: Like I had said earlier, it's always a focus for our organization. We are fortunate to have amazing staff members, amazing medical staff that comes here every day to provide the best care for you, as patients, and quality here is everybody's job. Not job in a bad way, but it's something that should be brought to light during each interaction.

Katie J.: I think maybe calling is a better word.

Abby: Yeah. I agree.

Katie J.: It's not a job. It's a calling when you're in healthcare. Anything else you'd like to share or shout out to our providers, our team here before we wrap up?

Abby: Not that I can think of. I think I'm just so fortunate to be able to work here, to be able to help drive some of these quality improvement initiatives with a very engaged team of folks here at Lake Region.

Katie J.: Absolutely. So, congratulations to you and to your team and to everyone here at Lake Region Healthcare on an A-rating from the Leapfrog Group, again in this rating period. And a thank you to everyone at Lake Region Healthcare and to all of our patients who put their trust in us and do provide us with that feedback to help us be better every day.

Abby Drouillard our Director of Quality at Lake Region Healthcare here to talk about the A-rating from the Leapfrog Group that Lake Region Healthcare recently received. Thanks for your time today and all that you do, Abby.

Abby: Thanks Katie, very much.

Katie J.: Abby Drouillard and Katie Johnson on Apple A Day today, reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.