



**Keeping You Up-To-Date on  
New and Important Developments**

**March 2007**

## **LifeSpan - The Right Place at the Right Time!**

### **Greetings!**

Many thanks for your overwhelmingly positive feedback, suggestions, ideas and input on our #1 newsletter and fledgling website! Evolving daily, [www.LifeSpanCM.com](http://www.LifeSpanCM.com) has taken on a life of its own, and we encourage you to visit us to see how we've incorporated your recommendations and to check out what's new.

Post a comment on our blog, and, as always, I will appreciate your comments and feedback!

*Michael Newell RN MSN* Michael Newell, RN, MSN, President & CEO LifeSpan Care Management, LLC

### **Walter Reed Hospital: *Just the Tip of the Iceberg?***

If even our venerated Iraqi War wounded can't get the treatment they deserve at America's foremost Army Medical Center, the average patient adrift in the maze of the health-care system doesn't stand a chance.

Wounded, heavily medicated, brain-damaged, and crippled soldiers were left to their own devices in a filthy, vermin-infested facility, prompting national outrage and what the Boston Globe has described as, "the suspicion that Walter Reed is not the exception but the rule, the most galling symbol of a badly broken system." (3/11/2007).

The tragedy at Walter Reed has further convinced us of the importance of our mission of advocacy and counseling, protecting our clients and their families from the devastating effects of illness and disability as they wend their way through the monolith of healthcare in America.

A groundbreaking 1999 report by the Institute of Medicine found that up to 98,000 Americans die every year from preventable medical errors made in hospitals alone. There are more deaths in hospitals each year from preventable medical mistakes than there are from vehicle accidents, breast cancer, and AIDS.

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### **Why LifeSpan?**

Many people are confused about what we really do. Briefly, LifeSpan Care Management assists families to navigate (and survive) the health care system in a number of ways:

- We do a complete review of the health status and health history of the patient, and provide the client (usually the off-spring or spouse) with a written report and plan of care that outlines what treatment options, expected outcomes and costs (our cost and other out-of-pocket expenses) should be expected for the specific situation our client and family face.
- We attend doctor appointments, treatment care conferences, interface with the insurer, the lawyer, etc. as needed.
- We refer to appropriate providers and assist in negotiating the cost and quality-control the service.
- We also help clients make informed decisions about care alternatives, including alternative care therapies, if the client wishes to go in that direction.
- We comment on the competencies of health care providers based on their credentials and whether they are meeting (or have met) the standard of care.

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## Tip of the Iceberg

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Using Hospital Quality Alliance data from 3,558 hospitals, the researchers studied 10 quality indicators, tests or treatments that have been shown to reduce death or improve health, for three important medical conditions: acute myocardial infarction, congestive heart failure and pneumonia. They assessed how well hospitals performed and found that for six of the ten indicators, patients failed to receive needed care about 10 to 20 percent of the time. For the other four indicators, performance was much worse.

In other categories the researchers found that academic hospitals had higher performance scores than non-academic

## File Under, WE KNEW IT ALL ALONG:

Study results reported by [www.Medscape.com](http://www.Medscape.com) in January showed that hospitals with a higher proportion of registered nurses (among other factors) have an improved 30-day survival rating.

"Based on our findings, we recommend that, if hospitals have goals of minimizing unnecessary patient death for their acute medical patient population, they should maximize the proportion of Registered Nurses in providing direct care . . . Furthermore, because of the impact that higher proportions of baccalaureate-prepared nursing staff had on lowering hospital mortality rates, we recommend that hospitals aggressively seek to hire and retain baccalaureate-prepared nurses to care for acute medical patients."

According to the current investigators, nurses provide much of the care hospitalized patients receive. Therefore, the investigators of this study hypothesized that structures and processes of nursing care would have an impact on patient outcomes and that their findings could help develop strategies that manage nursing care structures and processes to minimize unnecessary patient death for acute medical patients.

## One Last Note:

The Camden Waterfront Technology Center will soon host a grand opening on the premises, an occasion we're hoping will bring more attention to our endeavor. We'll keep you apprised of the festivities, and hope you'll be able to come in and see our beautiful offices and meet our management team. Until then, we enjoy and learn from your feedback, so keep it coming!

hospitals for acute myocardial infarction and congestive heart failure, but lower scores for pneumonia. Not-for-profit hospitals consistently had significantly higher scores than for-profit hospitals. The results showed hospitals in the Northeast and Midwest outperformed hospitals in the West and South.

In the company of a LifeSpan Care Manager, two heads are, indeed, better than one. We know where to go and what to do when you get there. As a result, these kinds of risks are dramatically reduced.

LifeSpan Registered Nurse Care Managers come from the hospital trenches and understand what our patients are up against. We are singularly equipped to shepherd clients safely through the hospital experience, completely avoiding it whenever possible.

## Why LifeSpan? *(continued)*

- We put the client's health and legal records on a password-protected flash drive (the LifeSpan GuardianKey™) to enable coordination of care or for travelers. We are available to these clients if they have a health event, and since we know them, we can advocate for them via telephone (or in person) wherever they are.

Our RNs have advanced degrees and/or specialty certifications, meaning that they have point expertise regarding the disease process the patient faces. We address many practical issues that arise in regard to chronic and catastrophic illness, solving problems before most people (including doctors) even realize that a problem exists.

Our credentials are available to view on our web site, as is the position descriptions of our nurse "Care Partners."

In a nutshell, LCM turns the medical system around so the focus, once again, becomes the patient. We invite you to visit our website at [www.LifeSpanCM.com](http://www.LifeSpanCM.com) to learn more about LCM

*Healthcare Coordination and Advocacy*



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