



## **KershawHealth CEO Column**

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### **KershawHealth's Core Commitment to Patient Care**

There have been recent media reports about hospitals in South Carolina facing cuts in Medicare payments due to rising rates of hospital-acquired infections and hospital readmissions. These reimbursement reductions come as part of a drive by the healthcare community, including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), to increase patient safety and quality of care. There's nothing wrong with that – we all should be held accountable. Hospitals across the country are working hard to attack the complex issues involved in care and to institute best practices to improve outcomes.

Success in patient safety and quality of care *is* coming. KershawHealth scored 100% in April and May on all six Quality Core Measures reported to The Joint Commission, the country's premier accreditation organization. When the June report is completed in a few days, we fully expect to have scored 100% on all six again. Six measures, three months, eighteen perfect scores – that is a truly remarkable accomplishment.

This success is a reflection of the commitment of the entire KershawHealth team to doing what matters most to them – providing great patient care every day. It has been nurtured by an unrelenting focus on quality outcomes. And it is resulting in better, more consistent care. As a healthcare consumer, you expect to receive the best possible care, and Core Measures are one way we can assure you that is true. In addition, because these six Core Measures are publicly reported, and are the same for all hospitals, consumers can compare KershawHealth's performance to other hospitals in South Carolina.

The six Core Measures are for heart attack, heart failure, stroke, VTE (venous thromboembolism), pneumonia, and surgical care improvement project (SCIP). They are based on proven best practice therapies and key actions that have been clinically shown to reduce the risk of complications and prevent recurrences in this group of common hospitalizations. While the measures themselves are based on sets of quality indicators and appropriate therapies, the basic concept underlying them is straightforward – implement a proven treatment for every patient with a given condition every time. Focusing on this relatively small number of conditions that frequently cause hospitalizations makes it possible to impact a large number of patients with comparatively few steps.

This process has been seen in industry for decades now. Recognize a problem. Break the process down. Reduce complexity. Utilize assets, including people, in the most effective ways. Identify weak spots and correct them.

Rebuild the process so it can be replicated time and again with measurable, standardized results. Review results and refine the process continually.

Those are exactly the steps teams at KershawHealth implemented to create success in our Core Measures performance. They didn't get there overnight, and it wasn't an easy process. It took thoughtful examination, training, incremental change on many fronts, and a willingness to do things differently. The end result however, is higher quality, safer patient care. That is the real success.

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