



NEWS RELEASE

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CALIFORNIA RELEASES SECOND REPORT ON COMMUNITY-ACQUIRED PNEUMONIA

*Blue Cross of California Health Care Management Executive Josh Valdez, DBA
Cites Importance of the Report*

THOUSAND OAKS, CA – Californians hospitalized with community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) could more than double their chances of survival by being admitted to one of the states best hospitals for treating this disease, according to a newly released state report, Community-Acquired Pneumonia: Hospital Outcomes in California, 2002-2004.

The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD) released the results of its second report on the quality of care that California hospitals provide to patients with CAP. The report, which provides information on individual hospital performance, covers the years 2002 to 2004. During this period, more than 203,000 adult CAP patients were admitted to 390 California hospitals. Approximately 12 percent of these patients died within 30 days after admission. However, researchers note that the risk of death varies greatly depending upon where a patient receives care.

According to the report, patients who were treated at the best hospitals had an 8 percent risk of dying, whereas in the worst hospitals, the risk of death was more than twice as great at 17 percent. These large differences in death rates are noteworthy because they are risk-adjusted, meaning that they take into account the fact that some hospitals have sicker patients than others.

“For pneumonia patients who are admitted to a hospital, timely diagnosis and treatment are critical for improving outcomes and the chances of survival,” said Blue Cross of California Health Care Management Executive Josh Valdez, DBA, a member of the California Health Policy and Data Advisory Commission, which participates in all the OSHPD reports. “It is especially important that hospitals with poor outcomes review how they care for pneumonia patients to identify and correct any shortcomings.”

Of the 390 hospitals that reported CAP cases, 25 hospitals had mortality rates that were better than expected and 28 had mortality rates that were worse than expected. Most of the hospitals (309) had mortality rates in the as expected or normal range.

Pneumonia is an inflammation of the lungs resulting from infection by bacteria or respiratory viruses. It is the sixth leading cause of death nationally and approximately two to four million cases occur annually

in the United States. CAP is pneumonia that is acquired by people living at home in the community, as opposed to hospital-acquired pneumonia, which is acquired by patients while they are hospitalized.

“This is a very significant and important report,” said Robert McIntire, Senior Vice President of Health Care Management. “Josh Valdez is the only representative from the health insurance industry appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger to serve on the California Health Policy and Data Advisory Commission. Blue Cross of California is very proud to have Josh on this prestigious committee, which works toward improving public health. We are committed to improving the lives of the people we serve and the health of our communities. The rest of the country should view this report as a guiding example of how work done by OSHPD and CHPDAC, in which Josh participates, can achieve awareness and positively impact the delivery of care.”

The report can be accessed online at www.oshpd.ca.gov .

About Blue Cross of California:

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