

David M. Carlisle, M.D., Ph.D., Director
1600 9th Street, Room 433
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 654-1606
Fax (916) 653-1448
www.oshpd.ca.gov

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CONTACT: Patrick Sullivan
(916) 654-1606

CALIFORNIA RELEASES SECOND REPORT ON COMMUNITY-ACQUIRED PNEUMONIA

SACRAMENTO – Californians hospitalized with community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) could more than double their chances of survival by being admitted to one of the state's 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.

"For pneumonia patients who are admitted to a hospital, timely diagnosis and treatment are critical for improving outcomes and the chances of survival," said OSHPD Director Dr. David Carlisle. "It is especially important that hospitals with poor outcomes review how they care for pneumonia patients to identify and correct any shortcomings."

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.

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.

The report can be accessed online at
www.oshpd.ca.gov/hqad/outcomes/studies/cap/index.htm.

