

A Statement from Dr. Michael Karpf
re: the UK Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery Program

Colleagues:

UK HealthCare is firmly and unequivocally committed to providing high quality, safe, patient-centered care to each and every patient. We are also advocates for transparency in health care and, to that end, we launched a UK HealthCare quality website in February of 2013, which can be viewed here:

<http://ukhealthcare.uky.edu/quality/>

Because of your hard work and commitment, we have made great strides in this area. From the website, you can see that we are leaders among our peer group, other major academic medical centers as noted by our mortality index (observed deaths over expected deaths) of 0.73 which places us as 11th out of 108 university health systems. All of the data on this site are based on large numbers and have been appropriately risk adjusted and benchmarked against other medical centers.

Recently, some questions have been raised publicly about our Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery program. We have been hesitant to release data as we do not want to compromise our approach to aggressive quality improvement or compromise patient privacy.

Today we are responding as fully as we can within what we believe federal law allows. **Our overall mortality rate in the Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery program was 5.8 percent for the period of 2008 through 2012.** During this period, the mortality rates ranged from 4.5 percent to 7.1 percent. These ranges are comparable to national mortality rates averaging 5.3 percent for programs of similar size to ours.

Additionally, in order to sustain a culture of excellence, we are all committed to aggressive quality improvement. Anytime a question is raised about a clinical program or a patient's care, we bring all involved parties together and review the situation and circumstances in a 'no holds barred' manner. Sometimes we even choose to put a program 'on hold,' until we are certain that we are doing everything necessary to provide the highest level of care. This is what we did with our Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery program.

In fact, a federal law, the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act, created a broad privilege for the medical peer review process. When health care providers engage in self-critical examinations designed to improve patient safety, enhance patient quality, and promote better health care outcomes, the statute prohibits disclosure. This process is the only way we can assure that health care will continuously improve

We are committed to fulfilling our Kentucky Promise – to assure that Kentuckians can get the best of care right here in Kentucky regardless of the issue or complexity of the care required. We have a promise to keep – and we will.

Michael Karpf, MD
UK Executive VP for Health Affairs