

Ajax-Pickering hospital applauded for transparency

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DURHAM -- Out of 136 acute care hospitals in Ontario, only 17 allowed the Fraser Institute to name them in its most recent report card.

The Rouge Valley Health System, which has campuses in Ajax and Scarborough, was one of the 17 but Lakeridge Health Corporation was not.

The recently-released Hospital Report Card: Ontario 2009 compares in detail the performance of Ontario's hospitals on indicators of quality and patient safety. This year's numbers reveal a drop from 2006 when 43 hospitals agreed to be identified. Nadeem Esmail, the institute's director of health system performance studies and co-author of the report card, said those who refuse to be identified are "hiding behind a wall of silence."

"By refusing to be identified, Ontario hospital administrators are hiding vital information from Ontario taxpayers and patients about the quality of tax-funded health care provided in their community," he said.

RVHS is one hospital that has allowed the public to see how it stacks up against others in Ontario, he said in an interview.

"By agreeing to be identified, I think (RVHS) should be applauded," he said.

Janet Harris, RVHS vice-president of quality, risk, professional practice and chief nursing executive, said she understands some hospitals might have trouble with the methodology used in the report, which was developed by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. But RVHS chose to participate as a way to demonstrate transparency and help gauge where improvements can be made.

"It really comes down to the board and the CEO's commitment to being open and transparent," Ms. Harris said.

RVHS will communicate the data in the report with the different departments in both hospital campuses, she said.

Lakeridge Health Corporation, which has sites in Oshawa, Bowmanville and Port Perry, was one of many Ontario hospitals that did not agree to be identified in the study.

"Lakeridge doesn't actively participate in the Fraser Report because we, like many other hospitals, have concerns with



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AJAX -- The east side of The Rouge Valley Health Ajax Pickering site is now the main entrance to the hospital because of construction. March 16 2009

regards to the methodology used," said Lakeridge spokesman Arnel Schiratti.

He stressed Lakeridge does value accountability and participates in many other studies and performance measures.

The report can be found at www.hospitalreportcards.org.