Heart study grades hospitals on surgery
By Sandy Kleffman
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**Summit Medical Center in Oakland is one of eight California hospitals with a significantly better than expected survival rate for Its heart bypass patients, a new state study reveals.** Other East Bay hospitals ranked in the average range. Mt. Diablo Medical Center in Concord, which prides itself on its Heart program and does a large volume of such surgeries, declined participate. Also opting out of the Voluntary study was San Ramon Regional Medical Center.

The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development released its latest analysis of outcomes for adult coronary artery bypass graft surgeries from 2000 to 2002.

The study is designed to provide consumers with information as they make important health care decisions. Where you have your surgery done matters in terms of whether or not you will come home alive," said Cheryl Damberg, director of research for Pacific Business Group on Health, a coalition of health Care purchasers that collaborated on the study. "We have very little information as consumers in the health Care market," Damberg said. "It's basically like a throw of the dice for the average consumer."

**Summit heart surgeon Dr. Junaid Khan attributed the program's success to a long history and a High volume of such operations. Summit became one of the first Northern California hospitals to do heart surgeries in the late 1950s.**

**Today, a team of 800 cardiac and vascular physicians, nurses and technicians perform four to eight heart surgeries each day at Summit. That enables team Members to get used to a routine and be innovative about adopting the best practices, Khan said. Statewide, the study found that hospitals with the highest volume of heart bypass surgeries tend to have better outcomes than other institutions.**

Mt. Diablo opted out shortly before state officials released a 1999 study, said Joseph Parker, director of the state Healthcare Outcomes Center. "After they saw their results, they decided to withdraw," Parker said.