



# HEALTHGRADES®

## America's 50 Best Hospitals 2009 Methodology

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HealthGrades' America's 50 Best Hospitals Award recognizes hospitals for consistent excellence by identifying those hospitals that have received HealthGrades' Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence™ (DHA-CE) designation for the most consecutive years. To identify America's 50 Best Hospitals, HealthGrades uses a two-step process:

- 1 Hospitals who were DHA-CE recipients for all of the seven years that HealthGrades has awarded the DHA-CE were identified.
- 2 Hospitals who were DHA-CE recipients for all of the last six years that HealthGrades has awarded DHA-CE were identified.
  - The six-year recipients were sorted by z-score, using the average z-score from the most recent DHP-CE analysis. The average z-score is a statistical measure of hospital quality outcomes.
  - The top hospitals from this list were then added to the list from step 1 to create a list of America's 50 Best Hospitals.

### Summary of DHA-CE Award Process

To help consumers evaluate and compare hospital performance, HealthGrades has analyzed patient outcome data for virtually every hospital in the country across 26 different patient cohorts. HealthGrades' risk-adjustment methodology considers important differences in patient demographic (e.g., age, gender) and clinical characteristics (e.g., underlying medical conditions) that could increase the patient's risk of mortality or complications. Hospitals are then assigned one of three star ratings: one-star (poor), three-star (average), or five-star (best) for each of 26 procedures and diagnoses. To be eligible to receive a star rating, a hospital must have a minimum of 30 cases over the three years of study and at least five cases in the most recent year of analysis (2007). For more information on HealthGrades' risk-adjustment methodology, read the complete methodology *HealthGrades Hospital Report Cards™ Mortality and Complication Based Outcomes Methodology* at [www.HealthGrades.com](http://www.HealthGrades.com).

To be considered for HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence (DHA-CE), a hospital had to have had star ratings in at least 19 of the 26 HealthGrades procedures and diagnoses using MedPAR data. Additionally, a minimum average star rating of 3.42 was required for the most recent DHA-CE award.

Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence average z-score is the straight average of all z-scores associated with star ratings, with equal weights given to each z-score, whether the z-score is associated with complications, in-house mortality, 30-day mortality, or 180-day mortality. For more information see *HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award Clinical Excellence Methodology* at [www.HealthGrades.com](http://www.HealthGrades.com).