



**HEALTHGRADES®**  
GUIDING AMERICA TO BETTER HEALTHCARE®

## HealthGrades in the News

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### THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

#### How to Size Up Your Hospital

#### Improved Public Databases Let People Compare Practices and Outcomes; The Importance of Looking Past the Numbers

"A private company, Health Grades Inc. of Golden, Colo., also rates doctors and hospitals and provides information on a broader range of outcomes. The company's site -- [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com)<sup>7</sup> -- rates hospitals on 32 conditions and procedures, from appendectomies to heart-valve-replacement surgery. The site, which offers data on more than 5,000 hospitals, draws on Medicare billing data to calculate the rate of complications or deaths in the wake of each procedure, giving a star rating and specific percentages.

Much of the information is available free on the site, which is searchable by state, procedure and other criteria. Or, for \$18, the group will provide more elaborate reports, including average-length-of-stay data and price comparisons.

However, you won't get much on smaller hospitals: If a facility doesn't report handling a condition or procedure at least 30 times in three years, Health Grades says its data aren't statistically significant.

Some insurers and large employers provide members and employees with access to reports from Health Grades... Don't stick with just one tool, says Samantha Collier, Health Grades' chief medical officer. 'Go to all the sites you can. See if you're getting similar data.'"

*The Wall Street Journal, July 10, 2007*

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### Los Angeles Times

#### How to Find a Good Doctor

#### It's easier now as physicians provide more info and become more patient friendly. A key question to ask: How is the practice run?

"The company HealthGrades, for instance, collects public information such as education, gender and board certification about doctors around the country and, for 15 states, malpractice payments — and charges a fee for the report. HealthGrades spokesman Scott Shapiro says the company does not expect to offer information about practice design (such as computerization) in the near future.

But the reports do note whether a doctor has received a quality designation from a private quality organization called Bridges to Excellence, which offers doctors a review and assessment of how they handle specific diseases such as stroke and diabetes. In some places, these ratings can earn doctors financial reward from employers."

*Los Angeles Times, July 6, 2007*



### Is There a (High-Quality) Doctor In the House?

"HealthGrades, a site visited by 3 million Americans each year, is another useful resource operated by a private company in Golden, Colo. The firm has been reporting hospital performance since 1998 using an analysis of publicly available Medicare data. HealthGrades scores every hospital in the country on a five-star system that takes into account outcome data and specific patient populations.

'We take very, very complex information and we present it to consumers in a useful and friendly way,' says Scott Shapiro, vice president of corporate communications and marketing for HealthGrades.

HealthGrades is currently one of the only services offering doctor quality reports. Users of this service can access basic information-medical education, board certifications, malpractice lawsuit history, and state sanction information-on 650,000 practicing physicians. To critics who complain that these variables don't provide an accurate assessment of a physician's competence, HealthGrades spokesperson Scott Shapiro says, 'We provide a full professional portrait of a physician that includes many different data points.' "

- *MSN Health and Fitness, June 15, 2007*

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### How do I get a booked, top doctor to see me quickly?

"Do you really need the top dermatologist for a rash?" asks Dr. Samantha Collier, chief medical officer for Health Grades Inc., which ranks the quality of doctors, hospitals and nursing homes. 'Reserve the top doctors for when you really have a potentially dangerous condition.'

Collier said to leave a message directly for the doctor and more times than not, the physician will return the call. Again, stress the severity of your problem and explain why it is important that he or she treat you."

- *Associated Press Financial Wire, June 5, 2007*

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### Night Shift Nightmare: After dark is prime time for hospital mistakes. How to protect yourself.

"There are many reasons to feel anxious when entering a hospital. In April, a HealthGrades study showed that some 248,000 patient deaths over a three-year period were preventable. What's less widely known, at least to the general public, is that mistakes tend to multiply on the night shift. You won't find it in any hospital brochure, but within the medical world, the dangers after dark are well known."

- *Reader's Digest, June 2007*

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### Transparency provides better look at health care

"Shopping around for a heart bypass operation?

If you are, you might be wondering about such things as the hospital's bypass-surgery death rate, how long you'll be in the hospital and how much the surgery costs.

...Some of the best-known hospital report cards are produced by private research firms. HealthGrades in Golden, Colo., uses government and other records to rate how patients fared after treatment—after adjusting for the severity of their illnesses, age and other factors. 'We don't just report the best (hospitals). We know people want to stay away from the worst,' says chief medical officer Samantha Collier."

- *USA Today, May 22, 2007*

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### The Informed Patient: Better Ways to Treat Back Pain—Insurers, Employers Target Excessive Scans and Surgeries To Improve Patient Outcomes

"...Bridges to Excellence, a group of large corporations, including General Electric Co., Procter & Gamble Co. and Ford Motor Co., will use the NCOA quality measures for its own Spine Care Link program for MDs and osteopaths; top performers in the program can earn as much as \$50 a year for each patient covered by a participating employer, and will be listed on the HealthGrades Physician Quality Ratings Web site for consumers (healthgrades.com). 'Overtreatment of back pain often leads to expensive and sometimes dangerous care that leaves them in worse health,' says Francois de Brantes, coordinator of the Bridges to Excellence program."

- *The Wall Street Journal*, May 16, 2007

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### How to Find a Good Doctor Hire an Expert

"Health Grades Inc., based in Golden, Colo., offers reports combining licensing, medical training, board certification, recent state and federal disciplinary records and local hospital ratings, starting at about \$18 per doctor. For an added fee, you can search medical-malpractice lawsuit settlements from some states. The reports include extras as well, including a list of issues to consider when picking a doctor."

- *The Wall Street Journal*, April 24, 2007

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## The Washington Post

### Hospitals Check Their Charts

"Rankings Push Them to Improve Care - To find the best hospital in the Washington region, you may have to drive a bit.

You could go north - not to the famed Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore but to the Baltimore Washington Medical Center in Glen Burnie, MD. Or you could drive west, over the Blue Ridge to the Shenandoah Valley, where Winchester Medical Center is located.

...On the other hand, if you consult the Web site of a company called HealthGrades, you might head for two of Inova's hospitals, Alexandria and Fairfax, which boast five-star ratings in three clinical areas."

- *Washington Post*, April 20, 2007

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### Fox News Housecall:

#### Why it's important to choose a good hospital when you are sick.

"....HealthGrades took the records of 40 million Medicare patients... and provides a list of hospitals with the lowest death rates for these 40 million people. They also analyzed what hospital you should go to for a particular condition to get treated, such as bypass surgery, cancer surgery, whatever. And you can look this up on the Internet if you have a computer, it is [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com). Remember, that if you can't find one of these good hospitals in your own community, you maybe should consider going to a neighboring community, or going somewhere else. But it is very important to check out the hospital first."

- *Fox News Channel*, February 11, 2007

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## CBS NEWS

### Health Watch

"A new study shows there's a big difference in successful care between the best hospitals and all the rest. Dr. Senay has details... The study was done by a company called HealthGrades, one of the leading independent rating companies for hospitals. They did it with data that's publicly available. It's Medicare admission data. They looked over a period from 2003 to 2005, 5,000 hospitals they analyzed, looking at 26 diagnoses and procedures. In the end they found only 5% of those 5,000 hospitals met what they characterized to be the highest quality."

– CBS News, January 29, 2007

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## CBS NEWS

### Surfing for Surgery

"Like millions of Americans, Gary Garcia is shopping online, CBS News correspondent Wyatt Andrews reports. But he's not on eBay or Amazon.com. Garcia needs a new heart valve, and he's shopping for surgery. Using a Web site called [HealthGrades.com](http://HealthGrades.com), Garcia learns which nearby hospital is the best at heart surgery – and then, to his amazement, he gets an estimated breakdown of the costs. He gets the list price for his operation, the discounted price his insurance will pay and his estimated co-payment. 'I am looking for a combination of the price, the quality, the efficiency,' Garcia explains."

– CBS News, December 7, 2006

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## **The Washington Post**

"Older patients were 69 percent less likely to die last year at hundreds of the best hospitals than at hundreds of the worst, a study found. While hospitals reduced mortality by 7.9 percent in the three years through 2005, some had larger reductions, and the gap between worst and best widened by about 5 percent last year alone,' Colorado-based Health Grades, Inc. said yesterday. The research by the health-industry ratings company looked at patients age 65 and older. 'Although everybody's improving, the best are getting better and the bottom isn't improving as fast,' said Samantha Collier, the study's author."

– The Washington Post, October 17, 2006

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## **Bloomberg**

"While hospitals reduced mortality by 7.9 percent in the three years through 2005, some had larger reductions, and the gap between worst and best widened about 5 percent last year alone, Golden, Colorado-based Health Grades, Inc. said today. The research by the health-industry ratings company looked at patients age 65 and older."

– Bloomberg, October 16, 2006

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## **Los Angeles Times**

"Quality of health care in the U.S. is increasingly becoming a question of location. Older patients were 69 percent less likely to die at the nation's best hospitals last year than at the worse-performing facilities, according to an annual study of Medicare hospitalization records released by Health Grades, Inc."

– Los Angeles Times, October 16, 2006

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"We all make a lot of decisions to try to improve our health, things like whether or not to work out, if you eat healthy, if you take vitamins; but a new study out this morning shows it is your choice of hospital that could be the most important health decision you ever made. Joining us now with the results of that study is Sarah Loughran, the executive vice president of HealthGrades. Sarah, what did you find in the survey?"

"Well, the study is the largest annual study of hospitals in America. What it found is that although the quality of care provided by hospitals overall is improving, there is a wide chasm in quality between the best hospitals and those that are not providing top-notch care."

– *CNBC, October 16, 2006*

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"A survey released today by HealthGrades, an independent healthcare ratings organization, shows a widening gap between the best- and worst-performing non-federal hospitals in the United States. The ninth annual HealthGrades survey rates 5,000 non-federal US hospitals with a 1-, 3-, or 5-star rating indicating poor, average, or excellent outcomes in each of 28 medical categories."

– *Reuters, October 16, 2006*

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### How Good is Your Doctor?

"The healthgrades.com site sells reports on doctors for \$12.95 each ... HealthGrades also incorporates consumer reviews into its reports, providing graphs that show how much other patients trust a physician and to what extent they would recommend the doctor to family and friends."

– *The Wall Street Journal, July 7, 2006*

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### Negotiating Lower Healthcare Costs

*Jean Chatzky:* "These sorts of prices are becoming available as far as information is concerned to consumers – before we had no idea."

*Al Roker:* "How do you get that information?"

*Chatzky:* "You get it from a number of different sources. We got these from a company called HealthGrades; they're the largest provider of healthcare quality information. They've just started providing cost reports for 55 different procedures. They're \$7.95, but hey, if you're going for a \$55,000 surgery, what is \$7.95?"

– *NBC's Today Show, May 3, 2006*

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## Newsweek

### Avoiding Big Bills

"These days, health-care costs can be high even for the insured. A report released this week from Health Grades – a company that ranks hospitals – suggests you can bargain down your health care like the cost of a car."

– *Newsweek, March 27, 2006*

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## The Washington Post

### Price Check

"People without health insurance and those with high-deductible policies often have strong incentives to weigh the cost of medical care. Starting this week, a Colorado company called HealthGrades is offering consumers price quotes for dozens of procedures, including cataract surgery, hysterectomy and the implanting of a pacemaker."

– *The Washington Post*, March 21, 2006

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### Company to Offer Picture of Medical Costs

"Beginning today, consumers can learn the cost of 42 medical procedures ranging from gastric bypass to cataract surgery through the website of HealthGrades.com, based in suburban Denver."

– *Associated Press, as published in USA Today*, March 20, 2006

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"If you've ever wondered how much health care truly costs, one company says it has the answer. But it'll cost you. For \$7.95 and some patient information, HealthGrades Incorporated says it'll generate a report on expected out-of-pocket costs, average prices negotiated by insurers and the average amount charged by providers. You can get a report through the company's website, [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) ..."

– *CNN*, March 20, 2006

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## The New York Times

### Few New York City Hospitals Cited Among Best in Death-Risk Study

"In fact, only seven hospitals statewide — and just two in the city — made the list of hospitals in the country where patients have the lowest risk of death or serious complications, according to a report to be released today. The study, by HealthGrades, a health care analysis firm, is in its fourth year, and each year has yielded disappointing results for New York."

– *The New York Times*, February 6, 2006

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"Yes, they are called elective C-sections when a woman chooses to have them but they are not medically necessary. According to the new report by the group HealthGrades, they have risen by 36% in a three-year period."

– *CNN*, September 12, 2005

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"One of the most common questions I get is how to pick a good hospital? Tough question. We'll talk about it for a few minutes with Dr. Samantha Collier, vice president of medical affairs for **HealthGrades**. Let me begin by asking you to tell us about **HealthGrades** and how you go about grading hospitals?"

"It's the leading healthcare grading company in the United States..."

– *ABC News*, August 3, 2005

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## BusinessWeek

### Hunting for Hospitals that Measure Up

HealthGrades (HGRD), based in Golden, Colo., offers detailed reports tracking performance in seven specialties from heart care to orthopedics at HealthGrades.com.

– *BusinessWeek*, June 13, 2005

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## REUTERS

### Medical Errors Edging Up in U.S., Study Finds

Hospital-acquired infections are worsening in the United States, even though the problem is widely recognized, according to a report issued on Monday. And the problem of such infections provides a good indication of which hospitals are prone to errors overall, the report, from Colorado-based Health Grades Inc, finds.

– *Reuters*, May 2, 2005

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## Newsweek

### Health: Shedding Light on Hospitals

"No one wants to trust his heart-bypass surgery to a mediocre hospital. But how do you sort the reliable ones from the rest? ... **Healthgrades.com**, which charges for some of its information, examines mortality and complication rates for 28 procedures and diagnoses, including hip replacement and bypass."

– *Newsweek*, April 25, 2005

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## BusinessWeek

### Saving Lives Shouldn't Be This Hard

"To get the real scoop on a hospital in a form you can understand, you need only 10 bucks and two words: **HealthGrades.com**. The Colorado consulting firm rates hospitals using a quantitative formula based on results of Medicare cases. From orthopedics to heart disease, their ratings break down hospitals' practices in detail and reduce things to simple star ratings you can decipher even when you're in pain and your head is spinning. Very basic info is free, and a long summary of a hospital costs \$9.95. In a hospital, an aspirin seems to cost three times that. Next time, I'll demand any hospital that wants my business give me their HealthGrades scorecard."

– *BusinessWeek*, March 28, 2005

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

### The Informed Patient

"How would you rate the care you received during your last doctor's visit or hospital stay? ... Among the most ambitious efforts is a plan to be announced today by health-care ratings company Health Grades Inc. for a national launch of CompareYourCare, an interactive Web site. The site was developed by the nonprofit health quality group Foundation for Accountability, or FAACT."

– *The Wall Street Journal*, February 23, 2005

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## The New York Times

"Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg praised the city's public hospitals yesterday, asserting that the quality of care they provide is so good that poor New Yorkers receive better medical service than wealthy patients at private hospitals. ... Another Web-based rating service, Health Grades, uses Medicare and Medicaid data to generate reports on doctors and hospitals, available for a fee. Its reports on the 11 city-operated hospitals are a mixed bag, with many of them faring well in some areas and poorly in others. Health Grades cited three New York hospitals, none city-operated, for overall clinical excellence last year: New York Presbyterian Hospital and Beth Israel Medical Center, both in Manhattan, and Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn."

– *The New York Times*, January 1, 2005

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"The Problem: How does your doctor or hospital stack up to the competition? ... Some companies, such as Health Grades Inc. ([www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com)), provide doctor ratings directly to consumers for a nominal charge."

– *The Wall Street Journal*, December 30, 2004

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"The current system fails to spur health care providers to 'identify, compensate (for) and reduce errors' because they fear lawsuits, according to a study released in 2002 by the Institute of Medicine, a federal advisory group. It estimated that medical errors result in more than 44,000 deaths a year. A new study by HealthGrades, a health care rating organization, said errors caused 195,000 deaths, on average, in 2000, 2001 and 2002."

– *USA Today*, September 14, 2004

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## Newsweek

"According to HealthGrades, the health-care-rating organization that conducted the study, needless deaths averaged 195,000 a year in 2000, 2001, and 2002. 'That's the equivalent of 390 jumbo jets full of people dying each year,' says Dr. Samantha Collier, vice president of medical affairs."

– *Newsweek*, August 2, 2004

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## The New York Times

"A new survey of data from 50 states concluded that medical errors are killing 195,000 people a year in American hospitals – double the previous estimate. HealthGrades, a private company that rates hospitals for insurers and health plans, said that if hospital errors were included on the nation's list of the leading causes of death, they would show up as No. 6 – ahead of diabetes, pneumonia and Alzheimer's."

– *The New York Times Op-Ed*, August 1, 2004

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## REUTERS

"As many as 195,000 people a year could be dying in U.S. hospitals because of easily prevented errors, a company said on Tuesday in an estimate that doubles previous figures. Lakewood, Colorado-based HealthGrades Inc. said its data covers all 50 states and is more up-to-date than a 1999 study from the Institute of Medicine that said 98,000 people a year die from medical errors."

– Reuters, July 27, 2004

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"The study by Health Grades Inc., a health-care consulting firm in Colorado that rates hospitals, estimated that medical errors in U.S. hospitals contributed to almost 600,000 patient deaths over the past three years, double the number if deaths from a study published in 2000 by the Institute of Medicine."

– The Wall Street Journal, July 27, 2004

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## The Boston Globe

"There is little evidence that patient safety has improved in the last five years,' said Dr. Samantha Collier, vice president of medical affairs at HealthGrades, which publishes rankings of hospitals and doctors. 'The equivalent of 390 jumbo jets full of people are dying each year due to likely preventable, in-hospital medical errors, making this one of the leading killers in the US."

– The Boston Globe, July 27, 2004

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## Smart Money

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL MAGAZINE OF PERSONAL FINANCE

"And then there's HealthGrades, which has branched out from providing hospital data to offer profiles on some 650,000 doctors. When Jeff Burger, of Mason City, Iowa, was trying to persuade his mother to undergo a bypass at a hospital near his home, he says he used the site to check the medical-school credentials of the doctors there. The news seemed to calm her. 'Mom was pleased to see the surgeons out here in the sticks had gone to tony East Coast schools,' he recalls ... HealthGrades has begun upgrading its offering by turning patients' subjective impressions about doctors into 'physician-patient experience tool."

– SmartMoney, June, 2004

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## CNN

"My first tip today, you have got to get the skinny on doctors. You know, it used to be that you could only ask maybe office mates, friends for a doctor's name. Not any more. Here's the good news. There are lots of great Web sites you can go to. One of them, HealthGrades.com, there you can find out – everything out from education, training, board certification. The really good news, you can sort these names by specialty and even location. So, it's a great Web site."

– CNN, May 12, 2004

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## The Boston Globe

"Specialists in obstetrics say the trend toward elective C-sections or C-sections on demand is small but growing, with such planned surgical deliveries having increased by 20 percent in both the United States and Massachusetts between 1999 and 2001, and even more since then. According to HealthGrades, a research group, just under 2 percent of all births in Massachusetts in 2001 were elective C-sections."

– The Boston Globe, April 20, 2004

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"That's the thinking behind the following list of the best hospitals for 20 common medical conditions, compiled with the help of HealthGrades, a firm that uses Medicare mortality and complication data to rate hospitals. On the assumption that you may be willing to travel for excellent medical care but prefer staying somewhat close to home, we asked Sarah Loughran and Dr. Samantha Collier of HealthGrades to provide the names of top hospitals in each of five regions."

– *Money Magazine, Fall, 2003*

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*Katie Couric:* You also say research hospitals, find out how many times they've performed a particular type of surgery and what their success rate is and complications ... How do you do that research, though?

*Dr. Dumas:* You know, there's a Web site called **HealthGrades.com** that you can go to. We talk about it in our book. And it'll tell you, just like a restaurant, five star, three star, one star. This could save your life.

– *NBC's Today Show, October 9, 2003*

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"Health Grades, Inc., which measures performance using Medicare data, examined Wichita's hospitals and found that Kansas Heart Hospital had lower, risk-adjusted in-hospital mortality rates for five different cardiac procedures than Via Christi Regional Medical Center, a general acute care hospital."

– *Associated Press, August 4, 2003*

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"More women are choosing to have Caesarean sections instead of vaginal births, according to a report released Monday, and their decisions, together with doctors' cooperation, has become a contentious subject among obstetricians, politicians and feminists. The report is the first of its kind by Health Grades, Inc., a consultant and research group, which evaluated data from 2,000 hospitals in 18 states. The study found that 1.56 percent of deliveries in those states were "patient choice" C-sections in 1999. In 2001, 1.87 percent were elective procedures."

– *CNN, July 21, 2003*

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"More Moms Opt to Undergo C-Section Births, Study Finds ... HealthGrades released the patient-choice cesarean data in conjunction with its new 2003 Hospital Quality Ratings for Obstetric Services for nearly 2,000 hospitals. The free information is available at [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com)."

– *USA Today, July 21, 2003*

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"Twelve steps to handle a disturbing diagnosis ... #8. Choose Your Hospital Wisely. The closest hospital may be convenient, but it's probably a poor choice unless its staff has a great deal of experience in treating patients in your situation. You can get a quick read on this by checking [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) ..."

– *AARP The Magazine, May/June 2003*

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"At the end of the day you will end up with a few really strong report card organizations that consumers think about going to," says Salber. Leapfrog, NCOA and Health Grades, among others make up that list, she says.

*– HealthLeaders, February, 2003*

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"A Colorado-based healthcare company called HealthGrades at [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) is the only consumer-oriented source for data on 5,000 hospitals nationwide and the surgical and hospital procedures they perform ... It's clear from this year's data that making an informed choice can be a matter of life and death."

*– NBC's Today Show, September 30, 2002*

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"You can certainly find more information on a car you are considering buying, where you might be going to dinner, the appliance that you are interested in purchasing, as opposed to who's going to perform your surgery and where that surgery is going to be performed," says Kerry Hicks, who works at HealthGrades."

*– NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw, May 10, 2002*

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"... The free [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com) draws on the Medicare data about fatality rates and the percentage of procedures with poor results. They also [display] a new quality measure known as Leapfrog, which judges hospitals based on whether or not they use a computer system that can check for errors when patient drug orders are entered, whether they have appropriate specialists available for their intensive care units, and whether they perform a minimum number of certain procedures."

*– BusinessWeek, May 6, 2002*

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## THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

"The HealthGrades site, [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com), led Edward Deitzel, of Rising Sun, Md., to Northshore Regional Hospital in the New Orleans suburb of Slidell. The 57-year-old retiree says he suffered complications after undergoing a quadruple coronary bypass at a Delaware hospital. So he began looking for another heart surgeon and heard about one named John Breaux in Louisiana. Then Mr. Deitzel's sister-in-law, 'surfing the Internet,' he says, discovered that Northshore Regional, where Dr. Breaux had an affiliation, had received a five-star rating from HealthGrades. 'I got into my car and drove to Louisiana,' says Mr. Deitzel."

*– The Wall Street Journal, May 1, 2002*

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"HealthGrades offers 1, 3, and 5-star ratings for hospitals by procedure, as well as the volume of procedures performed in the hospital. When looking at procedure volume, the idea is that the higher the volume, the better the outcome of the procedure.

HealthGrades also allows the prospective patient to view the mortality percentages as a result of complications from the procedure. The patient can then compare and choose from hospitals in their chosen area based on this information."

*– CNBC's Closing Bell, May 1, 2002*

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