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America's 50 Best Hospitals Identified by HealthGrades

Analysis of Patient Outcomes at U.S. Hospitals Identifies Top Performers

List of Award Recipients Found at HealthGrades.com

GOLDEN, Colo. (February 24, 2009) – The HealthGrades America's 50 Best Hospitals for 2009 were identified in a report issued today by the leading independent healthcare ratings organization. These hospitals represent an elite group of the highest performing healthcare organizations in the nation, which have maintained patient outcomes in the top five percent in the country for at least the last six consecutive years. The recipients have been posted on www.healthgrades.com.

To identify these hospitals, HealthGrades analyzed over 110 million hospitalization records that every non-federal hospital in the country has submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services of the federal Department of Health and Human Services. To be listed among HealthGrades America's 50 Best Hospitals, facilities must have demonstrated clinical outcomes – in terms of mortality and complication rates – that are among the top five percent in the nation. They must have reached this threshold not just in one medical specialty, but across 26 different procedures and conditions and over a minimum of the past six consecutive years.

These elite hospitals were found to have an approximate 27 percent lower mortality rate than all other U.S. hospitals and a complication rate that was eight percent lower.

“For a hospital to be in the top five percent in the nation in terms of quality, and then to maintain that for at least six consecutive years, means that the hospital has found a way to weave clinical excellence into the fabric of the organization” said Dr. Samantha Collier, HealthGrades' chief medical officer and one of the study's authors. “There is no doubt these hospitals are dedicated to providing outstanding patient care, every single day.”

HealthGrades America's 50 Best Hospital designation is based exclusively on clinical outcomes – risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates for patients at every one of the nation's nearly 5,000 non-federal hospitals. Hospitals cannot opt-in or out of this independent analysis. HealthGrades' annual assessment of mortality and complication rates in American hospitals analyzes the following procedures and diagnoses and then risk-adjusts the data to account for differences in patient populations among hospitals:

- Back and Neck Surgery (Spinal Fusion)
- Back and Neck Surgery (except Spinal Fusion)
- Bowel Obstruction
- Carotid Surgery
- Cholecystectomy
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Coronary Bypass Surgery
- Coronary Interventional Procedures (Angioplasty and Stents)
- Diabetic Acidosis and Coma
- Gastrointestinal Bleed
- Gastrointestinal Surgeries and Procedures
- Heart Attack
- Heart Failure
- Hip Fracture Repair
- Pancreatitis
- Peripheral Vascular Bypass
- Pneumonia
- Prostatectomy
- Pulmonary Embolism
- Resection/Replacement of Abdominal Aorta
- Respiratory Failure
- Sepsis
- Stroke
- Total Hip Replacement
- Total Knee Replacement
- Valve Replacement Surgery

HealthGrades' individual hospital ratings can be viewed for free at HealthGrades.com.

Methodology

In this analysis, HealthGrades independently and objectively analyzed approximately 110 million Medicare patient records from fiscal years 1999 through 2007 for 26 medical procedures and conditions. To be included in the analysis, hospitals must have met minimum thresholds in terms of patient volumes, quality ratings, and the range of services provided. Prior to comparing the in-hospital mortality and complication rates of the nation's hospitals, HealthGrades risk-adjusted the data to compare on equal footing hospitals that treated sicker patients. Hospitals with risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates that scored in the top five percent or better nationally and who received this designation for at least the past six consecutive years were recognized as America's 50 Best Hospitals. HealthGrades' methodology can be found in the study on the company's Web site.

About HealthGrades

Health Grades, Inc. (Nasdaq: [HGRD - News](#)) is the leading independent healthcare ratings organization, providing quality ratings, profiles and cost information on the nation's hospitals, physicians, nursing homes and prescription drugs. Millions of patients and many of the nation's largest employers, health plans and hospitals rely on HealthGrades' quality ratings, advisory services and decision-support resources. The HealthGrades Network of Web sites, including HealthGrades.com and WrongDiagnosis.com, is a top-ten health property according to ComScore and is the Internet's leading destination for patients choosing providers. More information on the company can be found at <http://www.healthgrades.com>.

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Editor's note: A full copy of the report is available at <http://www.healthgrades.com> or by contacting Scott Shapiro at sshapiro@healthgrades.com.