



Healthgrades 2020

REPORT TO THE NATION

Putting Hospital Quality Into Perspective



Healthcare industry insiders know that hospital quality outcomes, such as mortality and complications, are of the utmost importance to healthcare leaders. In fact, almost 60% of health system executives and clinicians ranked improving patient outcomes as the most critical priority for their respective organization.¹

For consumers, it can be equally critical to understand the disparity in performance between local area hospitals for specific conditions and procedures. According to Healthgrades, if all hospitals as a group performed similarly to hospitals rated 5-stars, on average: 220,019 lives could potentially have been saved and 149,403 complications could potentially have been avoided — approximately the populations of Richmond, Virginia and Savannah, Georgia respectively.*

As healthcare continues to be at the forefront of the national conversation, Healthgrades conducted research to understand the perception of hospital quality from unique points of view: consumers, hospital executives, and clinical leaders.



* Statistics are based on Healthgrades analysis of MedPAR data for years 2016-2018 and represent three-year estimates for Medicare patients only.



The 2020 evaluation of our nation's hospitals analyzes the performance of nearly 4,500 hospitals as measured by risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates. The evaluation illustrates the importance of transparency of hospital quality ratings as well as the need for continuous quality improvement. This analysis identifies the top-performing hospitals — namely those where outcomes are statistically significantly better than expected. To share the results, Healthgrades is publishing [the full list of Specialty Excellence Award™ recipients](#). This provides greater transparency for consumers, physicians, and healthcare professionals by surfacing top hospital performers in key specialties nationwide.

WHAT DO PATIENTS THINK ABOUT HOSPITAL QUALITY?

Consumers are more active and involved in their care than ever before, starting from the moment when they decide to seek out a provider. To understand how consumers viewed hospital and physician quality when making care decisions, we surveyed over 1,200 consumers using Healthgrades.com.

An overwhelming 97.1% of respondents said that they consider quality when selecting a hospital. More than half of respondents said that information about hospital quality performance, including outcomes and complications, is most important to them when selecting a hospital. The 2019 Healthcare Consumer Insight & Digital Engagement Survey from Binary Fountain supports these findings. It showed that while consumers look for personal recommendations when searching for a doctor, they are increasingly researching information about providers online, even after receiving a recommendation from a doctor, family, or friends.

The survey finds Healthgrades to be the top online rating site that consumers use to find a doctor, along with searching on Google, a hospital's own site, and Facebook. Similarly, when asked "what online platform(s) have you ever used to share your hospital experiences," respondents also cited Healthgrades as the top rating site.

Social media networks are also seeing a rise in utilization for provider searches, led by Facebook.² In the last three years, the number of patients not using online experiences to inform their healthcare choices has decreased by 81%. Clearly, consumers are trusting the shared experiences that others are publishing on review sites such as Healthgrades.com and on social media networks.

Indeed, these insights highlight that consumers' primary focus when selecting a provider is a combination of reputation and quality. These are the aspects that are most important to them when seeking out the ideal care experience.

RESPONSES FROM SURVEY OF HEALTHGRADES.COM USERS:

What factors may influence you when choosing a hospital?

*"My family takes into consideration patient care, outcomes, and hospital & doctor reputations. **We always research the facility and the doctor/surgeon before we make a decision.**"*



*"**Successful patient outcomes** are extremely important."*

*"**The quality of care is my top priority** when choosing a hospital. The reputation of the physician also influences my choice."*



"Since we started reporting on hospital quality over 20 years ago, consumers have become increasingly savvy when it comes to researching their health and now expect greater transparency as it relates to hospital quality. At Healthgrades, we're committed to providing the most relevant data that focuses on clinical outcomes so that consumers can make the smartest decisions for their own care. We commend those hospitals that have achieved recognition for their long-standing commitment to quality outcomes."

**BRAD
BOWMAN, MD**

Chief Medical Officer at
Healthgrades

WHAT DO HOSPITAL EXECUTIVES AND CLINICAL LEADERS THINK ABOUT QUALITY?

Hospital leaders are constantly being challenged to adapt to changes in healthcare. Initiatives like accountable care organizations and value-based care have put pressure on executives to improve outcomes while lowering costs. Healthgrades conducted a targeted survey of hospital executives and clinical leaders to understand priorities and how quality impacts their organization. It is overwhelmingly apparent that the majority of organizations share similar quality improvement goals and approaches.

When asked if quality improvement is one of the top priorities for the C-Suite, hospital leaders who responded to the survey unanimously said yes. The survey also highlighted the importance of patient outcomes, with 90% of respondents agreeing that patient outcomes are more important than reputation. In addition, 93.3% of executives and clinical leaders selected "delivering the best patient care" as the primary motivation for improving hospital quality.

WHEN ASKED HOW THEIR APPROACH TO HOSPITAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT HAS CHANGED OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS, A FEW THEMES EMERGED:

- ● Using data to drive quality improvement: Adoption of data analytics tools that integrate with EHR systems and other innovations has increased visibility into specific patient outcomes and opportunities for quality improvement. For hospital care teams that focus on quality improvement, emphasis is being placed on data to optimize patient clinical outcomes. One respondent cited the use of data analytics to actively monitor quality outcome measures and another hospital leader said, "We now have an emphasis on performance improvement and outcomes reporting at the individual and group level."

- ● Incorporating quality into the strategic plan of the hospital: One respondent said, “We gain leadership consensus on our priority metrics and have built up our internal clinical quality improvement resources to support our hospitals’ improvement work.”
- ● Increased resource investment: Hospitals are realizing benefits from improving outcomes and patient care by purchasing IT related tools including data analytics, process improvement tracking/dashboards, and EHR clinical add-ons. In addition, hospitals are improving outcomes and care by investing in quality staffing roles and new leadership roles including CQIO (Chief Quality Informatics Officer) and CMIO (Chief Medical Informatics Officer). A recent survey of healthcare executives by Definitive Healthcare explored factors that accelerated the adoption of value-based care: 44.8% of hospital leaders cited appropriate provider compensation and incentives as an accelerating factor³. These compensation and incentive bonuses could entice providers to increase support of value-based purchasing initiatives, furthering their commitment to continuous quality improvement.
- ● Promote a culture of quality: Quality performance is a team effort. Hospitals need to prioritize initiatives designed for every staff member. Organizations also are rewarding employees for achieving better patient outcomes and processes — financially and through hospital-wide recognition programs. As one respondent said, “Quality is a cultural movement. It used to be discussed mostly in the clinical setting but now all groups are part of the discussions and take pride in improving quality.”
- ● When it comes to patients, transparency and experience are key: Hospital leaders expressed the importance of communicating with patients and their families as well as setting appropriate expectations to build patient trust. In addition, driving awareness of a commitment to quality through every action and touchpoint is the best way to provide a positive patient experience.



“I believe that it is important for patients to be aware of the quality at the hospitals that they are going to. This should allow them to make an informed decision so they can seek care at the hospitals that do the best job and provide the safest care.”

HEALTHGRADES' POSITION ON HOSPITAL QUALITY

Healthgrades understands that quality improvement is a difficult task for hospitals, requiring considerable time, energy, and financial resources. Through years of quality improvement engagements with thousands of hospitals across the country, Healthgrades has partnered with hospitals to help them understand the drivers behind their quality outcomes. Healthgrades believes the most successful hospital quality improvement strategies will be guided by these four core tenets:

- 1 **Reduce unwanted clinical variability** — In a survey by the Health Care Advisory Board of 90 hospital and health system C-Suite executives, 53.2% ranked “minimizing unwarranted clinical variation” as a top priority⁴.
- 2 **Transparent and inclusive engagement with key stakeholders across the organization** — Cross-collaboration including hospital and clinical leadership, clinical care teams, quality improvement teams, clinical documentation specialists, etc. — is a best practice in identifying and implementing quality improvement initiatives.
- 3 **Establishing an organizational imperative around delivering the best outcomes to create a culture of quality** — Many business leaders know that culture drives performance. To effectively change an organization’s culture and focus on quality, all stakeholders throughout the organization must be aligned on goals and proactively collaborating to deliver the best possible care for every patient. Healthgrades’ partner hospitals that have created a strong culture focused on quality performance have seen benefits such as superior outcomes across multiple specialties, reduced readmissions, length of stay and cost per case, and improved reimbursements, volume, and market share.
- 4 **Commitment to continuous quality improvement** — Hospital leaders that we surveyed highlighted an increased focus on continuous improvement, including processes that prevent digression. Hospital leaders are using data monitoring dashboards and process tracking to ensure that they stay at a high level of performance and also monitor outputs.



In a hospital case study, one hospital was able to **reduce sepsis mortality**

by **33%**
and save

56 lives

by leveraging data-driven best practices and focused benchmarking.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this report are intended to help hospitals improve their quality outcomes and guide consumers to the right doctor and the right care at the right time for their specific healthcare needs. The Healthgrades 2020 Report to the Nation provides our audience with comprehensive data about the healthcare resources available to them, and also provides some context as to why quality is a cornerstone for success. By using Healthgrades' tools and services, all stakeholders can create a transparent, accessible, and positive healthcare experience.

Since 1998, Healthgrades has been reporting on hospital quality outcomes, providing trusted information to enable consumers to make informed healthcare decisions. This increased transparency helps hospitals to improve their quality outcomes by ensuring they provide best-in-class care. Healthgrades understands that providing hospital clinical outcome performance data to consumers is invaluable to their care decisions and experience.

METHODOLOGY

Star ratings for hospitals on healthgrades.com evaluate the differences in hospital performance. Healthgrades groups hospital quality performance into three categories:



Performed statistically better than expected in treating a condition or performing a procedure.



Performed as expected in treating a condition or performing a procedure.



Performed statistically significantly worse than expected in treating a condition or performing a procedure. Consumers should avoid 1-star rated hospitals, as the risk of complications or death may be considerably higher.

Hospital performance is measured by risk-adjusted in-hospital complication rates and in-hospital/ 30-day post-admission mortality rates for 32 conditions and procedures based on MedPAR outcomes data (from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) and for two procedures based on all-payer data from 15 states, representing just under half of the U.S. population.

For detailed information regarding our methodology, data sources, inclusion and exclusion criteria, risk-adjustment models, model statistics, and odds ratios, read [Healthgrades Mortality and Complications Outcomes 2020 Methodology](#).

For more information about partnering with Healthgrades to elevate and promote hospital quality, please contact:

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About Healthgrades

Healthgrades is dedicated to empowering stronger and more meaningful connections between patients and their healthcare providers. At www.healthgrades.com, we help millions of consumers each month to find and schedule appointments with their provider of choice. With our scheduling solutions and advanced analytics applications, we help our health system clients representing over 1,500 hospitals across the country to cultivate new patient relationships, improve patient access, and build customer loyalty. **At Healthgrades, better health gets a head start.**

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SOURCES:

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