




# HEALTHGRADES 2021 AMERICA'S BEST HOSPITALS™ SPECIAL REPORT: *Creating a Culture of Excellence*




## Hospital quality and care has never been more important.

When seeking hospital care, there are a number of factors to consider. To find the best care, it's important for patients to consider the measurable benefits of high quality care, and the disparities in outcomes when not treated at a high quality hospital.

For hospitals, quality and safety drive patient care decisions and increasingly, physician referral patterns as well. Yet, becoming one of Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals is difficult to achieve. Hospitals must build and maintain a culture of excellence, consistently focus on delivering better than expected outcomes, and embrace the challenges of quality improvement. This is even more critical in the era of COVID-19, which has placed additional stress on healthcare systems.

***The bottom line:*** Patients should be aware of top-performing hospitals in their community, and look to these centers of clinical excellence to support their health. To help underscore the efforts of the Healthgrades 2021 America's Best Hospital recipients, this year's report shares commentary from healthcare leaders at recipient hospitals across the country, providing insights on their efforts and successes in improving hospital quality.



***“Sustaining a high level of care requires a hospital-wide commitment and an ongoing ‘patient-first’ approach. Healthgrades applauds those hospitals that have risen to this challenge and have been recognized as the best in the nation. It is important that consumers consider hospital quality when it comes to selecting a hospital for their specific care needs.”***

**Brad Bowman, Chief Medical Officer**  
Healthgrades





## How We Measure Overall Clinical Excellence

The Healthgrades 2021 America's Best Hospitals Special Report showcases the ongoing efforts, culture, and commitment required to be the best. It also provides a deeper view into the Healthgrades analysis of performance at nearly 4,500 hospitals nationwide and surfaces key trends among the best hospitals in the nation.

To measure performance and evaluate hospitals for overall clinical excellence, Healthgrades uses Medicare inpatient data from the Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (MedPAR) file provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Healthgrades measures risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates across the 32 conditions and procedures for the most recent three years of patient data (Medicare Fiscal Years 2017-2019) analyzed for virtually every hospital in the country.

### Key Findings

One significant statistic from this analysis that brings into focus the performance of Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals is: if all hospitals performed similarly to the Healthgrades 2021 America's Best Hospitals, on average 167,235 lives could potentially have been saved and patients treated in a Healthgrades America's Best Hospital have, on average, a 27.4% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in a hospital that did not receive this award.\*

\*Statistics reflect Healthgrades America's 250 Best Hospitals™ and are based on Healthgrades analysis of MedPAR data for years 2017 through 2019 and represent 3-year estimates for Medicare inpatients only.



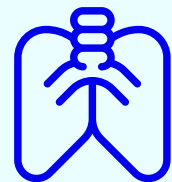
The 2021 Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals further outperform their peers in treating a core group of conditions across **Cardiac, Pulmonary, and Critical Care** that account for a majority of in-hospital mortalities in areas evaluated by Healthgrades. Patients are much more likely to have a successful treatment and less chance of dying — at one of Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals.

The importance of clinical success in key areas like **Pulmonary Care, Critical Care, and Cardiac Care** in becoming a top hospital in the nation cannot be understated. A commitment to excellence in these most challenging service areas, and the key conditions within each, is a hallmark of Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals. In the commentary provided by recipient hospitals, numerous “multi-decade” efforts on sepsis, heart failure, and other core areas were shared. In total, patient outcomes from these three core service areas influence more than 64% of the weighting to be considered a Healthgrades America's Best Hospital.



*“We’ve been very focused on sepsis for the last 15 years, because as your sepsis mortality goes, your overall mortality goes.”*

**Dr. Bernie Klein, Chief Executive**  
Providence Holy Cross Medical Center



PULMONARY CARE



CRITICAL CARE



CARDIAC CARE

## Key Areas of Clinical Success

To help underscore the performance of Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals in these key services, Healthgrades compared hospitals receiving the award as a group to those that did not receive the award as a group and found:

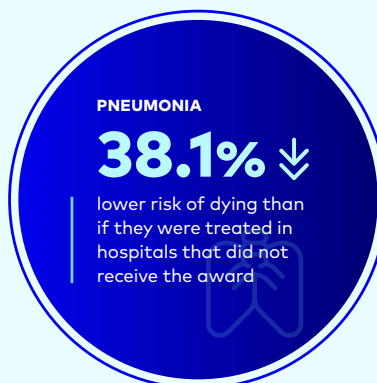


### Pulmonary Care

#### Pneumonia

From 2017-2019, patients treated for pneumonia in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 38.1% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

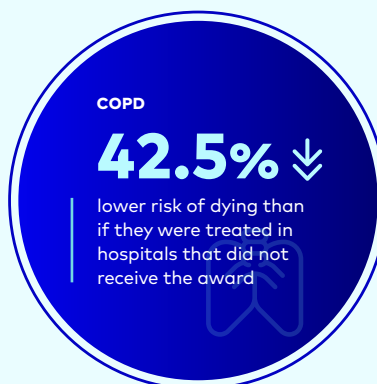
From 2017-2019, patients treated for pneumonia in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.6 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.



#### Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

From 2017-2019, patients treated for COPD in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 42.5% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated for COPD in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.7 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.







## Critical Care

### Sepsis

From 2017-2019, patients treated for sepsis in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 26.5% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated for sepsis in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.4 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.



### Respiratory Failure

From 2017-2019, patients treated for respiratory failure in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 26% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated for respiratory failure in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.4 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.





And because **February is American Heart Month**, the Cardiac Care analysis is even more timely.

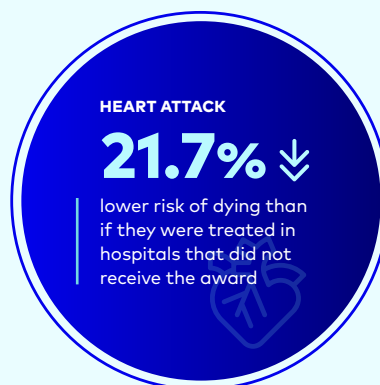


## Cardiac Care

### Heart Attack

From 2017-2019, patients treated for heart attack in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 21.7% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated for heart attack in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.3 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.



### Heart Failure

From 2017-2019, patients treated for heart failure in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 34.7% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated for heart failure in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.5 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.







## Cardiac Care

### Coronary Interventional Procedures (PCI)

From 2017-2019, patients treated with PCI in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 17% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated with PCI in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.2 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.



### Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting (CABG)

From 2017-2019, patients treated with CABG in hospitals achieving Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals Award have, on average, a 18.1% lower risk of dying than if they were treated in hospitals that did not receive the award\*.

From 2017-2019, patients treated with CABG in hospitals that did not receive the award are, on average, 1.2 times more likely to die than if they were treated in hospitals receiving the award\*.



\*Statistics reflect Healthgrades America's 250 Best Hospitals™ and are based on Healthgrades analysis of MedPAR data for years 2017 through 2019 and represent 3-year estimates for Medicare inpatients only.





# How hospitals achieve and sustain clinical excellence

Here are four of the most-cited strategies by organizations that are **Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals**.

1

## Have a true patient-centered mindset

Easier said than done, this requires shifting paradigms to arrange everything around patients and their outcomes. Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals engage patients and their families. They listen to them during and after the hospital stay, keeping their needs and concerns central. They focus on what makes the most difference to the patient's clinical outcomes.



*“The most important thing to address in achieving excellence: a culture defined by a laser focus on providing excellent, patient-centered care. Become a place where the wellness of the caregivers is important. So I say, invest in creating a transparent, respectful patient-centered organization, and the quality follows.”*

**Dr. Marcia Nelson, Chief Medical Officer**  
Enloe Medical Center



*“We always try to put the patient at the center of everything we do, and that requires a high level of accountability and ownership from our teams. That means that we have to have excellent people who are trained in the very best ways to care for the people who show up at our door.”*

**Elizabeth Angelo, System CNO  
& Sr. Vice President**  
Carle Foundation Hospital



*“Always be compassionate, because to be compassionate is good when you're applying medical knowledge and medical care. When you incorporate that with human feeling and compassion, that makes a difference.”*

**Dr. Javier Aduen, Chief of Pulmonary Division  
& Medical Director of Critical Care**  
Flagler Health

## 2

## Create ambitious goals

To achieve consistently great outcomes you have to set goals previously considered impossible — and then meet them. Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals focus on the highest impact goals, innovate to meet them, and measure the impact of changes. They look at best practices from other industries, recognizing that if other high-reliability enterprises can strive for zero defects, they can, too.



*“Think big: it’s about never being satisfied with what you’ve accomplished. Being grateful for what you’ve accomplished is good, but never be satisfied. Don’t be afraid to set higher goals. Somebody has got to be number one, why can’t it be us?”*

**Dia Nichols, President & CEO**  
AMITA Alexian Brothers Medical Center

*“Our feeling is that if we’re going to provide a service, it needs to be as good as anyone else’s, because that’s a type of care we would want for ourselves and our loved ones.”*



**Dr. Bernie Klein, Chief Executive**  
Providence Holy Cross Medical Center



## 3

## Know that everyone is accountable

Achieving excellence requires everyone's commitment. In a culture focused on quality, every hospital employee — no matter what their position — is a stakeholder in the quest for continuous improvement. Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals are committed to transparent reporting and accountability for outcomes.



*“The key is leadership presence. But it's also about transparency and accountability, both of which are hard to get sometimes. So we try to put out our information. We have a time set aside to review events that may have occurred, where we can focus the energy and attention of senior clinical leaders on an ongoing basis. That's really part of our culture.”*

**Dr. Yancy Phillips, Chief Clinical Officer**  
Holy Cross Health



*“We make our quality rankings real visible and real transparent — and we track and trend those rankings over time. I see the teams get energized by moving that dial. It's a very competitive group of folks here, and they're dedicated to making this a great place for patients to come.”*

**Paul Hiltz, President & CEO**  
NCH Healthcare System

## 4

## Have the courage to identify what's not working

Honestly determining what isn't working instead of looking away takes conviction. No matter how many tools are in use or how many data points collected, people and processes cannot improve unless everyone is willing to speak up. Employees need to know they won't be penalized for bringing forth quality and safety issues. Healthgrades America's Best Hospitals are honest about their flaws. They identify gaps and close them.



*“The first principle of high reliability is fixation on failure. Don't ignore lessons you can learn from, those cases that did have complications or didn't come out the way you thought. Not ignoring failures, learning from near misses, and making adjustments, that's a critical part of a high-reliability organization and the patient-centered culture that it takes to get consistent results.”*

**Dr. Hoyt Burdick, Chief Medical Officer**  
Cabell Huntington Hospital



*“I'm always proud to quote our president and CEO, Dr. James Leonard, who says patients are first. And he always reminds everyone in our system that he has their back. If they report a quality or safety issue, they're going to be protected. And we're going to fix it.”*

**Dr. Robert Healey, Chief Quality Officer**  
Carle Health

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 2021 Methodology](#).

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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 Healthgrades, we help millions of consumers each month find and schedule appointments with their provider of choice. With our scheduling solutions and advanced analytics applications, we help our health system and life sciences clients cultivate new patient relationships, improve patient access, and build customer loyalty.

At Healthgrades, better health gets a head start.

