

## **HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™ Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is today's news?**

- HealthGrades has issued an authoritative study of the best hospitals in America in terms of patient safety outcomes. It's the *HealthGrades Seventh Annual Patient Safety in American Hospitals Study*.
- This unique study identifies the top 15 percent of qualifying hospitals with the lowest patient safety event rates, including such incidents as post-operative infection and bed sores.
- To put it simply, people are more likely to have successful treatment without experiencing a patient safety event or medical error, on average, at hospitals in this category.
- Patient Safety Excellence hospitals, as identified in the study, perform in the top 15 percent of qualifying hospitals (see methodology below), and among the top five percent of all U.S. hospitals evaluated annually by HealthGrades.
- While this is largest study of its kind in the country, it only represents part of the patient safety picture. The prevalence of likely preventable patient safety events is taking a costly toll on our healthcare systems, in both lives and dollars.

### **How is this study different from other studies that HealthGrades issues?**

- This study evaluates a hospital's rate of incidence of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's (AHRQ) patient safety indicators (PSI). Keep reading for a list of these indicators and their potential effects.
- HealthGrades annual *Hospital Quality in America Study*, issued in the fall of each year, looks at clinical quality outcomes (risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates) in individual procedures and diagnoses for nearly every hospital in the country.

### **What is HealthGrades?**

- HealthGrades (Nasdaq:HGRD) is the leading healthcare ratings organization, providing ratings and profiles of hospitals, nursing homes and physicians. Consumers, and many of the nation's largest employers, health plans and hospitals, rely on HealthGrades' independent ratings and patient safety information to make healthcare decisions based on the quality of care.
- Each month, more than eight million consumers visit HealthGrades.com to research the quality and safety of healthcare providers.
- More than 450 hospitals nationwide have partnered with HealthGrades to develop solutions to their business and operational challenges.

## How are healthcare providers evaluated by HealthGrades?

- HealthGrades independently and objectively analyzes and rates almost 5,000 hospitals each year.
- Data on the clinical quality of providers is obtained from more than 70 independent public and private sources, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, state medical boards and state departments of health or public health.
- HealthGrades analyzes the healthcare provider data, and subsequently rates the clinical quality and evaluates the patient safety performance of providers, using detailed methodologies and statistical models developed by national experts. Our methodology white papers for clinical quality and patient safety are also available on the Web at [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com).

## What is the basis for the HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™?

- The HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™ is based on 12 indicators of patient safety developed by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. The analysis was done examining teaching hospitals and non-teaching hospitals separately, comparing hospitals to their peer group.

## What types of hospitals received the 2010 HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™?

- Teaching Hospitals and Non-teaching Hospitals.

## How was the Teaching Hospital peer group defined?

- The Teaching Hospitals were determined by using the Medicare Cost Report (Form CMS-2522-96).

## What is the methodology\* for the HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™?

- Used all MedPAR data (age 65 and older, including disability patients) for 2006-2008.
- Used AHRQ's established PSI's, QI Windows software, version 3.2, and methodology developed by a team of experts to identify each hospital's rate of 12 PSIs.
- Divided the hospitals into two peer groups: Teaching and Non-teaching.
- Risk-adjusted rates for each hospital and PSI calculated provided the hospital had at least 3 cases in the denominator.
- To be considered for the Award, hospitals must be rated by HealthGrades in at least 16 of 26 HealthGrades cohorts and have an overall star average of at least 2.5 (on a 1-5 scale).
- Final data set included 740 teaching and 848 non-teaching hospitals.
- Identified both teaching and non-teaching hospitals in the top 15 percent as "best performing".
- This final group of award recipients represents 5 percent of all US hospitals evaluated.

*\*The entire methodology can be found at [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com)*

## How many hospitals received the 2010 HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™?

- Number of recipients, teaching hospitals: 111
- Number of recipients, non-teaching hospitals: 127
- **Total: 238 recipients**
- This equates to five percent of the hospitals throughout the nation.

## What are the 15 Indicators studied in the HealthGrades Patient Safety Excellence Award™?

Patient Safety Indicator	Description and Potential Effects
*Complications of anesthesia	Can include severe nausea, breathing stops, severe confusion and death
Death in low mortality Diagnostic Related Groupings (DRGs)	Patients die while being treated for relatively simple problems
Decubitus ulcer	Bed sores
Death among surgical inpatients with serious treatable complications	
Iatrogenic Pneumothorax	Lung puncture causes the lung to collapse, seriously compromising breathing
Selected infections due to medical care	
Post-operative hip fracture	Inhospital fall which results in a broken hip
Post-operative hemorrhage or hematoma	Excessive bleeding after surgery
Post-operative physiologic and metabolic derangements	Blood chemistries become severely abnormal, which can lead to seizures, heart attacks, etc.
Post-operative respiratory failure	Patient cannot get enough oxygen without aid of a ventilator or similar machine
Post-operative pulmonary embolism or deep vein thrombosis	Potentially fatal blood clots form in the lungs/blood clots in the legs
Post-operative sepsis	Overwhelming whole-body infection
Post-operative abdominal wound dehiscence	Surgical incision opens, potentially exposing the internal organs or other structures
*Accidental puncture or laceration	Tears in arteries, nerves, bowel, etc
*Transfusion reaction	Patient gets fever, itching, or sometimes severe anaphylactic shock from getting the wrong types of blood

*\* These indicators were studied, but not used to rate hospitals*

## There are 20 AHRQ Indicators. Why does HealthGrades not use all of them?

- Three of the PSI's required E-codes in their numerator. This is known to be highly variable from state to state and hospital to hospital. They include:
  - Accidental puncture or laceration
  - Complications of anesthesia
  - Transfusion reaction
- Four of the PSI's are Obstetrical related, and thus were excluded as the data set being used is MEDPAR (ages 65+).

### **What is so special about these Patient Safety Excellence Award™ recipients?**

- Medicare patients going to hospitals ranked among the top 15 percent in terms of patient safety incidents had, on average, a 42.58 percent lower occurrence of patient safety incidents compared to bottom-ranked hospitals.
- Among Medicare patients, from 2006 through 2008, there were 958,202 patient safety events, affecting 908,401 patients and representing 2.29 percent of the 39.5 million hospitalizations.
- If all hospitals performed at the level of the top 15 percent, 218,572 patient safety incidents and 22,590 deaths could potentially have been avoided in the Medicare patient population, while saving the U.S. approximately \$2.1 billion during the years 2006 through 2008.
- Medicare beneficiaries experiencing one or more patient safety incidents had a one-in-ten chance of dying during their hospitalization.
- Between 2006 and 2008 there were 99,180 actual in-hospital deaths that occurred among patients who experienced one or more of the 15 patient safety events.

### **Can hospitals pay HealthGrades to receive the Patient Safety Excellence Award™?**

- **NO.** All hospital providers are rated by HealthGrades based on the exact same data (which is publicly available) and methodology. Hospitals cannot choose to have the data withheld from the study. Providers cannot “purchase” or “pay for” a positive HealthGrades rating; nor can providers pay to have substandard ratings changed.

### **Where is HealthGrades information available?**

- The complete list of the 2010 Patient Safety Excellence Award™ recipients, ratings of all hospitals and nursing homes, and information on physicians is available at [www.healthgrades.com](http://www.healthgrades.com).