

# Healthgrades Specialty Excellence Awards

Healthgrades publishes awards recognizing the top hospitals for specific conditions yearly

## Specialty Excellence Award Methodology

- 1 Heathgrades defines 34 condition or procedure cohorts, creating a list of specific procedures and diagnoses that define each, as well as a list of rare and/or clinically complex diagnoses that cannot be risk adjusted (which are excluded from the data).
- 2 Healthgrades pulls a list of all eligible hospitals for each condition (with at least 30 cases across three years of data and at least five cases in the current year).
- 3 Healthgrades then, depending on the cohort type, either evaluates the hospital's in-hospital and 30-day-post-admission mortality for that condition, or the occurrence of one or more in-hospital complications.
- 4 Healthgrades then compares a hospital's performance on these metrics with their expected performance based on their patients' clinical risk factors (ex. age, comorbid conditions, source of admission, etc.). Based on the difference between the actual and expected performance, hospitals are provided a z-score and stratified as better than expected, as expected, or worse than expected.

### Data Sources

- Medicare inpatient data from the Medicare Provider Analysis and Review (MedPAR) file which is purchased from CMS<sup>1</sup> for the years 2016-2018
- Healthgrades excludes MedPAR records for:
  - Patients under 65;
  - Patients who were transferred or who left against medical advice;
  - Patients whose record seemed inconsistent (i.e., the length of stay did not match their diagnosis, they had an invalid gender for their diagnosis, etc.); and
  - Patients who had any organ transplant.
- The bariatric surgery and appendectomy cohorts included all-payer data (from 2015-2017), since very few patients receiving these procedures are over the age of 65.

## Specialty Excellence Awards Designation Criteria

Healthgrades rolls up the 34 conditions or procedures into 16 specialty areas. To receive a Specialty Excellence Award, a hospital must be in the top 10% within each specialty area, as measured by their z-score. For specialty areas where more than one procedure or condition is included (ex. cardiac surgery includes coronary artery graft surgery and valve surgery), the volume-weighted z-scores are averaged across conditions.

In 2020, Healthgrades awarded 1,007 hospitals at least one Specialty Excellence Award. It further awarded the top 100 best hospitals in 11 specialty areas (by z-score in each area) a separate 'America's Best Hospitals for Specialty Care' award. It also recognized the 50 best hospitals in Cardiac Surgery and Vascular Surgery with a separate '50 Best Hospitals for Specialty Care' award.

## Specialty areas, conditions included, and outcomes assessed

Specialty Area	Conditions/ Procedures Included	Outcome Assessed
Bariatric Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bariatric surgery</li> </ul>	In-hospital complications
Cardiac Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery</li> <li>• Coronary interventional procedures (PCI)</li> <li>• Heart attack</li> <li>• Heart failure</li> <li>• Valve surgery</li> </ul>	Mortality*

1) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

Source: [Specialty Excellence Awards & America's Best Hospitals for Specialty Care Awards 2020 Methodology](#), healthgrades.com. Web. 22 Oct 2019. [Mortality and Complications Outcomes 2020 Methodology](#), healthgrades.com. Web. 22 Oct 2019. [advisory.com](#)

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Specialty Area	Conditions/ Procedures Included	Outcome Assessed
Cardiac Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) surgery</li> <li>Valve surgery</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Coronary Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coronary interventional procedures (angioplasty/ stent)</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Cranial Neurosurgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cranial neurosurgery</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Critical Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diabetic emergencies</li> <li>Pulmonary embolism</li> <li>Respiratory failure</li> <li>Sepsis</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Gastrointestinal Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bowel obstruction</li> <li>Colorectal surgeries</li> <li>Esophageal/stomach surgeries</li> <li>Gallbladder removal surgery</li> <li>Gastrointestinal bleed</li> <li>Pancreatitis</li> <li>Small intestine surgeries</li> </ul>	Mortality* and in-hospital complications
General Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bowel obstruction</li> <li>Colorectal surgeries</li> <li>Esophageal/stomach surgeries</li> <li>Gallbladder removal surgery</li> <li>Small intestine surgeries</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Joint Replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hip replacement</li> <li>Total knee replacement</li> </ul>	In-hospital complications
Neurosciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neurosurgery</li> <li>Stroke</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Orthopedic Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Back and neck surgeries (without spinal fusion)</li> <li>Hip fracture treatment</li> <li>Hip replacement</li> <li>Spinal fusion</li> <li>Total knee replacement</li> </ul>	In-hospital complications
Prostate Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prostate removal surgery</li> <li>Transurethral prostate resection surgery</li> </ul>	In-hospital complications
Pulmonary Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)</li> <li>Pneumonia</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Spine Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Back and neck surgeries (without spinal fusion)</li> <li>Spinal fusion</li> </ul>	In-hospital complications
Stroke Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stroke care (to be eligible, a hospital must have a transfer-out rate of less than 10% for the three years of data used)</li> </ul>	Mortality*
Vascular Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abdominal aortic aneurysm repair</li> <li>Carotid procedures</li> <li>Peripheral vascular bypass</li> </ul>	In-hospital complications

\*The in-hospital plus the 30-day mortality z-score receives 60% of the weight, and the in-hospital mortality z-score receives 40% of the weight.