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## New Rankings of the Best US Hospitals

from WebMD — a health information Web site for patients

Bill Hendrick

July 20, 2009 — *U.S. News & World Report* has released its annual "honor roll" of America's best medical centers, and Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore is at the top of the list for the 19th straight year.

The top 21 hospitals all earned high scores in at least six of 16 specialties, ranging from cancer and geriatric care to orthopaedics and urology.

Scores were based on both objective measures -- such as mortality rates, patient safety, and other care-related factors -- and subjective measures, such as reputation.

"I think these rankings are extremely meaningful to an extremely small number of patients, relatively speaking, who represent a very small piece of the patient population but whose need for a very high quality of care is extreme," Avery Comarow, the *U.S. News & World Report* statistician who compiled and analyzed the data, tells WebMD. "These rankings are not at all intended for those who need relatively routine procedures."

### The 'Best Hospitals' for 2009

Hospitals are listed below by total points. Here are the 21 hospitals that made the magazine's honor roll (two are tied for 10th place):

1. Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore
2. Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.
3. Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles
4. Cleveland Clinic
5. Massachusetts General, Boston
6. New York-Presbyterian University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell
7. University of California-San Francisco Medical Center
8. Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
9. Barnes-Jewish Hospital/Washington University, St. Louis
10. Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston
11. Duke University Medical Center, Durham, N.C.
12. University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle
13. UPMC-University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
14. University of Michigan Hospitals and Health Centers, Ann Arbor
15. Stanford Hospital and Clinics, Stanford, Calif.
16. Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, Tenn.
17. New York University Medical Center
18. Yale-New Haven Hospital, New Haven, Conn.
19. Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York
20. Methodist Hospital, Houston
21. Ohio State University Hospital, Columbus

### Top Hospitals by Specialty

Here are the No. 1 hospitals in each specialty, according to *U.S. News and World Report*:

- Cancer: M.D. Anderson Center, University of Texas, Houston
- Diabetes and endocrine disorders: Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.
- Digestive disorders: Mayo Clinic
- Ear, nose, throat: Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore
- Geriatric care: Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles
- Gynecology: Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston
- Heart and heart surgery: Cleveland Clinic
- Kidney disorders: Brigham and Women's Hospital
- Neurology and neurosurgery: Mayo Clinic
- Ophthalmology: Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, University of Miami
- Orthopaedics: Mayo Clinic
- Psychiatry: Massachusetts General, Boston
- Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
- Respiratory disorders: National Jewish Hospital, Denver
- Rheumatology: Johns Hopkins Hospital
- Urology: Johns Hopkins Hospital

### **Best Hospital Lists: How Useful Are They?**

American Hospital Association Senior Vice President Rick Wade tells WebMD that hospitals that made the honor roll and those that were ranked in the 16 specialty groups were generally teaching hospitals "with the most cutting-edge research and technology."

Wade says that hospitals that didn't score enough points to make a list should be avoided.

"You can investigate on your own," he says. "For people who don't live near a Hopkins, there are many community hospitals that have very good records."

Arthur Caplan, PhD, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, tells WebMD that lists for most people "are almost useless. The only data of value is on specific doctors, treating cases analogous to your own."

Rankings "are a quality perspective from 75,000 feet when what the prospective patient needs is precision at ground level about particular doctors doing particular things in situations close to the one the patient has," Caplan says.

#### **SOURCES:**

News release, *U.S. News & World Report*.

*U.S. News & World Report*: "America's Best Hospitals."

Avery Comarow, health rankings editor, *U.S. News & World Report*.

Arthur Caplan, PhD, director, Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania.

Rick Wade, senior vice president, American Hospital Association.

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