

## America's Best Hospitals: the 2009–10 Honor Roll

**They're the best of the best—the 0.4 percent of all hospitals with high scores in 6 or more specialties**

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Posted July 15, 2009

America's Best Hospitals, an annual ranking of the country's elite medical centers, is a tool for patients who need medical sophistication most facilities cannot offer. Unlike other rankings and ratings that grade hospitals on how well they execute routine procedures like outpatient hernia repair or manage common conditions like low-grade heart failure, the *U.S. News* approach looks at how well a hospital handles complex and demanding situations—replacing an 85-year-old man's heart valve, diagnosing and treating a spinal tumor, and dealing with inflammatory bowel disease, to name three examples. High-stakes medicine.

This year, the 20th for Best Hospitals, institutions are ranked in 16 specialties, from cancer and heart disease to respiratory disorders and urology. A total of 4,861 hospitals were considered; 174, or less than 0.4 percent of the total, were ranked in even one of the 16 specialties.

In 12 of the 16 specialties, those in which quality of care can spell life or death, hospitals were scored on reputation, death rate, patient safety, and care-related factors such as nursing and patient services; the 50 highest scorers were ranked. Scores and complete data for unranked hospitals are available as well. In the other four specialties—ophthalmology, psychiatry, rehabilitation, and rheumatology—hospitals were ranked on reputation alone, because so few patients die that mortality data don't mean much.

Here are a few of the details: Reputation, which counted as 32.5 percent of the score, was based on three years of specialist surveys—a total of almost 10,000 physicians were asked to name five hospitals they consider among the best in their specialty for difficult cases, without taking into account cost or location. A mortality index, also 32.5 percent of the score, indicates a hospital's ability to keep patients with serious problems alive. Patient safety, new this year, made up 5 percent of the score; it indicates how well a hospital minimizes harm to patients. And a group of other care-related factors, such as nurse staffing and available technology, accounted for the remaining 30 percent.

Of the 174 hospitals that are ranked in one or more specialties, 21 qualified for the Honor Roll by earning high scores in at least six specialties. This demonstrates unusual breadth of excellence. Johns Hopkins Hospital tops the list, as it has every year from 1991 on. (The Mayo Clinic was No. 1 in 1990, Best Hospitals' first year.)

Hospitals are listed by total points. A hospital got 2 points if ranked at or close to the top in a specialty and 1 point if ranked slightly lower.

Rank	Hospital	Points	Specialties
1	Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore	30	15
2	Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.	28	15
3	Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles	26	15
4	Cleveland Clinic	26	13
5	Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston	25	13
6	New York-Presbyterian University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell	24	13
7	University of California, San Francisco Medical Center	21	11
8	Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia	19	12
9	Barnes-Jewish Hospital/Washington University, St. Louis	17	12
10	Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston	17	10
10	Duke University Medical Center, Durham, N.C.	17	10
12	University of Washington Medical Center, Seattle	16	8
13	UPMC-University of Pittsburgh Medical Center	13	8
14	University of Michigan Hospitals and Health Centers, Ann Arbor	12	8
15	Stanford Hospital and Clinics, Stanford, Calif.	11	7
16	Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville	11	6
17	NYU Medical Center, New York	10	7
17	Yale-New Haven Hospital, New Haven, Conn.	10	7
19	Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York	9	7
20	Methodist Hospital, Houston	8	7
21	Ohio State University Hospital, Columbus	7	6

**Facilities that are AHF members**