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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DATA FINDS THAT NEW YORK HOSPITALS RANK POORLY WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER STATES

NYPIRG URGES NEW YORK STATE POLICYMAKERS TO INVESTIGATE POOR PERFORMANCE OF HOSPITALS; MAKE QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS A PRIORITY IN THE UPCOMING SESSION

(Albany, N.Y.) New York State hospitals compare poorly when compared to the rest of the nation, according to an analysis released today by the New York Public Interest Research Group and Lookout Hill Public Research Associates. The review, entitled "Code Blue: New York Hospitals' Poor quality Performance," relied on data obtained from the federal government that is used to evaluate the quality of hospital medical care offered.

The report was issued on the 20th anniversary of the landmark report issued by the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine report, *To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System*. That report documented a veritable epidemic of preventable deaths in United States hospitals. In a 2013 report published in the *Journal of Patient Safety* reported that nearly 400,000 U.S. hospital patient deaths each year were preventable.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publishes an annual *Medicare.gov/Hospital Compare*, which reports the quality of the nation's hospitals to the public. It gives each hospital one, two, three, four, or five quality stars, with one star-hospitals being the worst and five stars-hospitals the best. New York overall had lower quality stars than all of the 49 other states.

New York State ranked poorly when compared to 16 other major urbanized states. In New York, 34 percent of hospitals were a quality one-star this year.

New York hospitals were much more likely to be ranked by Medicare as "Below the national average" of quality measures than hospitals in the rest of the US.

- Safety of Care. Sixty-nine percent of New York City hospitals, 60 percent of Nassau-Suffolk-Westchester counties' hospitals and 41 percent of Upstate hospitals rated "Below the national average."
- Readmission. Ninety-seven percent of New York City hospitals, 87 percent of Nassau-Suffolk-Westchester counties' hospitals and 49 percent of Upstate hospitals were rated "Below the national average."
- Patient Experience. Ninety-four percent of New York City hospitals 60 percent of the Nassau-Suffolk and Westchester counties' hospitals and 60 percent of Upstate hospitals were "Below the national average."

NYPIRG Page 2

- Mortality. This is the only category in which New York hospitals ranked as well as other U.S. hospitals.

See Appendix H for the name of each hospital and its number of beds under “Below the national average,” “Same as the national average” or “Above the national average.”

This report does not dig deeper into the federal quality ranking system to analyze hospital care in New York, but its findings do raise questions for policymakers who are responsible for protecting hospital patients as well as the public who foots the bill for the additional costs resulting from poor quality care.

- Why did New York State hospitals rank so poorly?
- What has the New York Department of Health done to respond to the national rankings that have consistently found poor quality in state hospitals?
- Should New York annually compile patient outcome data and ensure that all patients have access to it?
- What progress has New York State made in meeting its goal to reduce by half New York’s hospital patients’ injuries and deaths, a promise made nearly 20 years ago?
- Will state lawmakers – who have the oversight responsibility of the health care system – convene public hearings to explore New York’s stunningly poor performance in the national quality of care rankings?
- Twenty-five years ago, New York established the nation’s most advanced system of examining hospital quality with its Risk-Adjusted Cardiac Bypass Mortality program. Why has so little been done to modernize and expand that approach to other procedures, as well as provide “real time” performance information to patients?

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