

Four National Studies Find New York Is Among the Worst States for Hospital Patient Safety

The best way to reduce the cost of medical malpractice insurance is to reduce the number of medical errors. Unfortunately, New York has farther to go than the rest of the country in making its hospitals safe:

In 2012, *Consumer Reports* rated hospitals nationwide on four “key” measures of patient safety. **Of the 50 lowest-scoring hospitals in the U.S., more than half (27) were in downstate New York.** Only one downstate hospital scored better than the national average. Senior Health Editor Joel Keehn wrote on the *Consumer Reports* website, “No one was more surprised than me—a New Yorker, through and through—to see just how badly Big Apple hospitals did in our new patient-safety ratings.”¹

The annual HealthGrades *Patient Safety in American Hospitals Study* for both 2010 and 2011 ranked **New York as one of the ten “worst” states for hospital patient safety.** The rankings were based on risk-adjusted performance on 13 patient safety indicators. HealthGrades also found that nationally these indicators were associated with \$7.3 billion in excess costs from 2007 to 2009. Based on New York’s proportion of the U.S. population, New York’s share was **\$460 million.**

In June 2012 the Leapfrog Group, a consortium of major employers that purchase health insurance and promotes better U.S. healthcare, gave U.S. hospitals a “hospital safety score” letter grade. In New York, 72% of hospitals received a C or worse compared to 47% nationally.² **New York was tied with two other states for the second worst grades,** after the District of Columbia. The grades were based on 26 Medicare and Leapfrog indicators.

According to the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality annual National Healthcare Quality Report for 2010, **“hospital care quality” in New York was “weak”** when compared to other states. AHRQ compared how well hospitals performed on 32 indicators including “patient safety” indicators like “post-operative sepsis per 1,000 elective-surgery discharges,” and “inpatient surgery – appropriate antibiotic timing.”

Instead of punishing the victims of medical mistakes through so-called “tort reform,” New York can save lives -- and millions in taxpayer dollars -- by improving patient safety.

¹ Accessed at <http://news.consumerreports.org/health/2012/03/new-york-city-area-hospitals-do-poorly-in-patient-safety-ratings.html>.

² To view state-by-state results, see <http://capsules.kaiserhealthnews.org/index.php/2012/06/lots-of-cs-as-hospitals-get-graded-for-patient-safety/>