

## **BWMC gets top ranking for care standards**

By MATTHEW MYERS Staff Writer

Published 02/11/09

Medical care at Baltimore Washington Medical Center is among the top 5 percent of hospitals nationwide, according to a new national survey.

HealthGrades.com listed the hospital on its 2009 Distinguished Hospitals for Clinical Excellence based on a review of overall performance.

Scott Shapiro, spokesman for HealthGrades.com, said some hospitals specialize in specific areas or excel with certain procedures but in order to make the list, hospitals must have low mortality and complication rates across the board in all operations.

"A hospital has to have a culture of quality from the administration to doctors to nurses in the organization and that's what drives the hospitals on the list," Shapiro said.

The survey is based on 41 million Medicare hospital discharges for 26 at-risk procedures. The analysis compared in-hospital risk-adjusted mortality rates for 17 inpatient procedures and diagnoses, and in-hospital risk-adjusted major complications rates for nine procedures, according to the study.

Mary Jozwik, vice president of quality and patient safety for Baltimore Washington Medical Center, said the term clinical excellence is another way of talking about outcomes.

"We're a very clinically sound hospital and it's nice when an outside source can tell us that," Jozwik said.

Baltimore Washington Medical Center is one of 270 out of the 4,919 community hospitals nationwide that made the list.

In 2007, the hospital was named to Thomas Reuter's Top Hospitals for its excellence in clinical outcomes, patient safety, financial performance and growth on patient volume.

Fourteen other Maryland hospitals made the list, including Harbor Hospital, Good Samaritan Hospital and the Greater Baltimore Medical Center in the Baltimore area. Anne Arundel Medical Center did not make the list.

Jozwik said the new award should give comfort to its patients who seek out top-notch care from the doctors and staff.

On average, patients at the hospitals that made the list are 27 percent less likely to die and 8 percent less likely to suffer from major complications, according to HealthGrades.com. The study also shows that 152,666 deaths could be prevented if all hospitals were at the Distinguished Level.

With extreme cases like heart attacks, hospitals in the top five percent have saved 11,625 lives more than hospitals not on the HealthGrades list.

"It makes everyone feel good and we give very good care and when an outside agency recognizes it, it gives us pride," Jozwik said.

*Copyright © 2009 The Maryland Gazette and Capital Gazette Communications, Inc.*