Fall 2024 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade Shows Significant Progress in Patient Safety Nationwide

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WASHINGTON, DC—The Leapfrog Group, an independent nonprofit focused on patient safety, today released its fall 2024 Hospital Safety Grade, evaluating nearly 3,000 hospitals on their ability to prevent medical errors, accidents and infections. The Hospital Safety Grade uses up to 30 performance measures to assign an “A, “B,” “C,” “D” or “F” to individual hospitals and uses a public, peer-reviewed methodology, calculated by top patient safety experts under the guidance of a National Expert Panel. It is transparent and free to the public. Leapfrog analysts use the data to observe national performance trends and state rankings.

For fall 2024, Utah ranks number one with the highest percentage of “A” hospitals for the third cycle in a row, followed by Virginia and Connecticut in second and third. The latest Grades also show hospitals are making progress in patient safety across several performance measures including notable improvements in healthcare-associated infections, hand hygiene and medication safety.

"Preventable deaths and harm in hospitals have been a major policy concern for decades. So, it is good news that Leapfrog’s latest Safety Grades reveal that hospitals across the country are making notable gains in patient safety, saving countless lives," stated Leah Binder, President and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. “Next, we need hospitals to accelerate this progress—because no one should have to die from a preventable error in a hospital.”

Key Improvements Nationally

Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs)

Since Leapfrog reported Hospital Safety Grades in fall 2022, when HAI rates were at their highest peak since 2016, average HAI scores have declined dramatically:

- Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI) decreased by 38%
- Catheter-associated urinary tract infections (CAUTI) decreased by 36%
- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) decreased by 34%

Hand Hygiene

As Leapfrog detailed in its 2024 Hand Hygiene Report, since Leapfrog began public reporting a tough new standard for hand hygiene in 2020, the percentage of hospitals achieving the standard has soared from 11% to 78%.

Medication Safety

Medication errors are the most common type of error that occur in hospitals and the new Hospital Safety Grade suggests improvements in how hospitals prevent them. Two of the measures in the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade show this progress:

Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE): Leapfrog tracks how well hospitals use CPOE systems to catch common errors in prescribing, such as prescribing the wrong dose or prescribing a medication with a dangerous interaction with other medications the patient takes. Studies have shown CPOE systems can reduce harm from prescriber errors by as much as 55%. In 2018, only 65.6% of hospitals met Leapfrog's Standard, while this year, that number rose to 88.1%.

Bar Code Medication Administration (BCMA): Leapfrog scores hospitals on deployment of BCMA systems, which use barcodes at the bedside to ensure the right patient gets the right medication at the right time. In 2018, 47.3% of graded hospitals met the standard, while this year, 86.9% did.

Trends in Safety Grades by State

Key findings on state performance on the fall 2024 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade include:

- The states with the highest percentages of "A" hospitals are Utah, Virginia, Connecticut, North Carolina, New Jersey, California, Rhode Island, Idaho, Pennsylvania, Colorado and South Carolina.
    - Utah ranks #1 in percentage of "A" hospitals for the third Safety Grade cycle in a row.
    - California ranks in the top 10 for the first time since fall 2014.
- There were no "A" hospitals in Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota or Vermont.

"Despite improvements seen in this fall's Safety Grade, significant variation in performance remains across U.S. hospitals," Binder added. "That's why it's so important for people to consult grades when making decisions about seeking care. All hospitals are not the same."

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program focused exclusively on preventing medical errors and patient harm. It is fully transparent, free to the public and updated biannually in the fall and spring.

Detailed hospital performance information, including patient experience and safety measures, as well as grades for individual hospitals searchable by states and localities is available at HospitalSafetyGrade.org.

About The Leapfrog Group

Founded in 2000 by large employers and other purchasers, The Leapfrog Group is an independent national nonprofit organization driving a movement for giant leaps for patient safety. Among its initiatives, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade was launched in 2012 and assigns letter grades to hospitals based on their record of patient safety, helping consumers protect themselves and their families from errors, injuries, accidents and infections. It is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. It is fully transparent and free to the public, and grades are updated biannually in the fall and in the spring. To look up your hospital's Safety Grade, please visit HospitalSafetyGrade.org. For more from Leapfrog, follow us on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram and sign up for our newsletter.

Source: Leapfrog CPOE Fact Sheet.