**Georgia Trend 2016 Top Hospitals**

In 2016, hospitals and other healthcare stakeholders continued to adjust their strategies, structures and processes to deliver affordable healthcare. The scale and scope of data required to track hospital performance is huge, and in spite of massive investments in technology and process changes, the healthcare industry continues to struggle with how to rank and report exceptional hospital performance.

Georgia Trend groups hospitals into one of four categories: Teaching Hospitals, regardless of the number of patient beds; Large Hospitals (more than 250 patient beds); Medium Hospitals (100-249 beds); and Small Hospitals (less than 100 beds). For the purpose of this article, teaching hospitals are defined as those whose primary mission includes teaching and are certified by the Association of American Medical Colleges Council of Teaching Hospitals and Health Systems. Hospital bed size was obtained from the American Hospital Directory.

Hospitals were ranked based on their Total Performance Score, which is calculated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services using information on the clinical process of care, patient experience of care, outcome and efficiency.

Georgia Trend’s rankings include only hospitals that participate in the CMS Hospital Value Based Purchasing (HVBP) program. Thus, VA medical centers, children’s hospitals, critical access hospitals, long-term care facilities and other hospitals excluded from the HVBP program are not included in these rankings. The data download date for our analysis was July 27, 2016.

Hospitals vary greatly in the quality of care and services they provide. While hospital ratings can play an important role in choosing where to go for an evaluation or procedure, the highest-rated hospital may not always be the best choice for an individual consumer. Many factors are involved, and consumers should always consult their doctors before making a decision. – Robert Materna