



AMH ranking in Surgical Safety

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“The Best Care Close to Home” is also the safest in Illinois when it comes to surgery.

Alton Memorial Hospital was tied for the top ranking with four other hospitals in a report that appears in the September 2013 issue of Consumer Reports. The ratings for the first time make public a measure that some hospitals now use to track quality -- the percentage of Medicare patients undergoing surgery who die in the hospital or stay longer than expected.

The other hospitals tied with AMH for the top honor included Decatur Memorial Hospital, Genesis Medical Center in Silvis, St. Margaret’s Hospital in Spring Valley and Trinity Hospital in Rock Island. No other hospital in the Metro East scored better than average.

Consumer Reports looked at results for 27 kinds of scheduled surgeries, which were combined into an overall surgery rating, and also developed ratings for five of those procedures: back surgery; replacements of the hip or knee; and procedures to remove blockages in arteries in the heart (angioplasty); or neck (carotid artery surgery).

“The safety score gives patients another way to compare hospitals on patient safety before selecting where to go for their surgery,” AMH President Dave Braasch said. “Our top ranking is validation of the efforts put forth each day by our surgeons and surgical staff to ensure our patients receive excellent care.”

Braasch said it’s an honor of which the AMH administration, physicians and staff are very appreciative.

“It’s a demonstration of Alton Memorial Hospital’s culture and the focus we have given to continuous improvement, process change, a quick implementation instilling best practices and enhancing communication,” Braasch said.

To develop the ratings, Consumer Reports worked with MPA, a health care consulting firm with expertise in analyzing medical claims and clinical records. This project uses billing claims that hospitals submitted to Medicare for patients 65 and older, from 2009 through 2011, and covers 2,463 hospitals in all 50 states plus Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico.

“Consumers have very little to go on when trying to select a hospital for surgery, not knowing which ones do a good job at keeping surgery patients safe and which ones don’t,” Lisa McGiffert, director of Consumer Reports’ Union’s Safe Patient Project, said in the report. “They might as well just throw a scalpel at a dartboard. Patients and their families shouldn’t have to make such important decisions with so little information.”