

Triangle hospitals struggle in quality study

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UNC Hospitals is just one of several Triangle hospitals that ranked below average in the CareChex study.

The Triangle is known nationally for its high-quality hospitals and medical centers. But that distinction may be undeserved, according to a new ranking by CareChex, a division of Comparison Medical Analytics, which evaluates medical quality.



None of the area's major hospitals were rated better than average by the organization, while several were ranked below average.

Rex Hospital, Duke Raleigh Hospital, Duke University Hospital, Durham Regional Hospital and WakeMed Cary Hospital were all ranked average in terms of overall hospital care, while Chatham Hospital, Franklin Regional Medical Center, UNC Hospitals and WakeMed Raleigh were rated one level below average.

Betsy Johnson Hospital in Dunn, Person Memorial Hospital in Roxboro and Johnson Memorial Hospital in Smithfield were given the organization's lowest ratings.

The rankings are based on a review of actual and expected mortality rates, complication rates and patient safety indicator rates, which are compiled by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The rankings also rely on doctor and nurse communications, staff responsiveness, pain control and post-discharge information.

The area didn't shine in the specialties either, with no area hospital being rated among the top providers in surgical care, cancer care, pulmonary care, cardiac care, major cardiac surgery, orthopedic care, major orthopedic surgery, neurological care, major neurosurgery or general surgery.

The North Carolina Specialty Hospital in Durham did receive the ranking of "highest," making it the only hospital in the region to achieve that ranking.

Duke and UNC Hospitals generally rank among the best in annual rankings by U.S News & World Report, with Duke among the nation's top 10 – albeit, that ranking tends to favor academic medical centers.