

# CENTER *express*

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL • UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS MEDICAL CENTER

## Passion for excellence gains 'Best' recognition

The hospital's remarkable rise on the Best Hospitals list reflects teamwork, focus on patients

When the word came down this week that six – count 'em, six! – of the hospital's specialties had been named to *U.S. News & World Report's* prestigious Best Hospitals list, the collective gasp heard round 39th and Rainbow was almost palpable.

"Think about it," said **Terry Rusconi**, senior director of quality improvement. "We first made the list four years ago with one. And then last year we had three – and now six! It's almost mind-boggling. Everyone I've talked to is just blown away."



During a leadership meeting to announce the exhilarating news, executives credited the hospital's strong partnership with physicians.

"This recognition is a testimonial to the care provided by a talented team of physicians – working

together as a team with staff from across the hospital," said **Bob Page**, president and CEO.

"Together, we're ensuring the best possible outcomes for patients through the implementation of evidence-based medicine, effective collaboration and cutting-

edge technology."

Six is more than just a number in the celebrated rankings. It opens the door for the hospital to be considered for the Best Hospitals Honor Roll – truly rarefied air that features the nation's most-recognized names in health care. (Just 14 were named this year).

While our hospital wasn't added to the Honor Roll

### The sweet six

- Ear, nose and throat
- Pulmonology
- Kidney disorders
- Heart and heart surgery
- Urology
- Geriatrics

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this year, simply qualifying for it is an amazing feat that most of our hospital leaders thought was still several years away, Rusconi said.

#### Four areas examined

The Best Hospitals list is produced annually by *U.S. News & World Report*, based on analysis of data from nearly 5,000 hospitals. The study explores four areas: reputation, mortality rate, patient safety and care-related factors such as nursing and patient services.

Only the top 50 hospitals in each of 16 specialty categories are named a Best Hospital. This year, just 152 hospitals made it to a list.

What's more, we're the only hospital in Kansas and in the Kansas City area to make any of the Best Hospitals lists. Details about our six:

- Ear, nose and throat, ranked 29th, up from 36th last year
- Pulmonology, ranked 30th, the first time on the list
- Kidney disorders, ranked 32nd, up from 48th last year
- Heart and heart surgery, ranked 37th, up from 39th last year, the fourth consecutive time on the list
- Urology, ranked 43rd, the first time on the list
- Geriatrics, ranked 47th, the first time on the list

The *U.S. News & World Report's* 2010-11 Best Hospitals lists is online at <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals>. It will be featured in the August print issue of *U.S. News*, available on newsstands July 27.

#### Other insights from this year's rankings

Like last year, many of our mortality and patient safety scores were near the top of their class. Of the 50 Best Hospitals in their categories, our Kidney Disorders had the second-best mortality index, Pulmonology was sixth, Heart and Heart surgery was seventh, and ENT was 10th.

The win in Geriatrics was especially intriguing. The recognition was based on care of patients ages 65 and over – across the entire

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– Bob Page, president and CEO

continuum of care, spanning more than 500 diagnostic related groups (DRGs).

Our reputation scores again were the biggest hurdles to receiving even higher ratings. While the Mayos, Clevelands and Johns Hopkins of the world frequently received reputation scores above 50 percent, most of our specialties were below 2.

Part of the challenge is the nature of the question: 200 board-certified specialists in each of the 16 categories are asked to name five hospitals they consider to be the best in their specialty for complex or difficult cases.

The reputation category may take years for us to build – though honors like the new Best Hospitals list certainly help. Meantime, Page said, the best we can do is continue to do what we do every day: focus on delivering the best in patient quality, safety and service.



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