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Local hospital programs among best in America

Business Courier of Cincinnati

Several Greater Cincinnati hospitals had programs ranked among the best in the country the U.S. News & World Report's 2008 "America's Best Hospitals" list.

For adults, Christ Hospital had four ranked programs: endocrinology at No. 29, heart and heart surgery at No. 26, neurology and neurosurgery at No. 34 and respiratory disorders at No. 38.

University ranked 31st for endocrinology, 41st for urology and 49th for kidney disease.

St. Elizabeth Medical Center ranked 44th for respiratory disorders.

For children, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center ranked third in the country for general pediatrics, fourth for cancer, third for digestive disorders, eighth for heart and heart surgery, sixth for neonatal care, third for respiratory disorders and 17th for neurology and neurosurgery.

The guide ranks 170 medical centers nationwide in 16 specialties, with full data available online for another 1,500 that are unranked.

The publication, available online now, will be on sale at newsstands Monday.

The rankings in 12 of the 16 specialties weigh three elements equally: reputation, death rate, and a set of care-related factors such as nursing and patient services. In these 12 specialties, hospitals have to pass through several gates to be ranked and considered a "Best Hospital:"

The first gate determines whether a hospital is eligible to be ranked at all by requiring that any of three conditions be met - to be a teaching hospital, to be affiliated with a teaching hospital, or to have at least six important medical technologies from a defined list of 13.

The second gate determines whether a hospital is eligible to be ranked in a particular specialty. To be eligible, the hospital had to either have at least a specified volume in certain procedures and conditions over three years, or had to have been nominated in our yearly specialist survey.

The third gate is whether a hospital does well enough to be ranked, based on its reputation, death rate, and factors such as nurse staffing and technology.

In the four other specialties - ophthalmology, psychiatry, rehabilitation, and rheumatology - ranking is based solely on reputation, derived from the three most recent physician surveys.

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