

Rating the VA Hospitals

USA Today is listing the star rating system for the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers based on the quality of care. The website has a link that allows searches for individual medical centers. The ratings have been done for years but the VA has refused to release the ratings saying they are meant for internal use only.

The top-rated hospitals received a 5 and the lowest a 1. According to the star ratings the best hospitals are in the Northeast and upper Midwest. In the Southwest the ratings are not so good with the top-rated hospital Palo Alto and the lowest a tie between Phoenix and Albuquerque (Table 1).

Table 1. Southwest VA medical center star compare VA hospitals ratings.

State	City	VA Star Rating	Compare VA Hospitals
Arizona	Phoenix	1	81
	Prescott	3	60
	Tucson	2	71
New Mexico	Albuquerque	1	82
Colorado	Denver	2	97
California	Fresno	2	74
	Loma Linda	2	94
	Long Beach	3	76
	Los Angeles	2	94
	Palo Alto	4	100
	Sacramento	3	92
	San Diego	3	91
	San Francisco	3	90
Hawaii	Honolulu	2	56
Nevada	Las Vegas	2	66

Quality can be difficult to measure and it is not clear what metrics were used in the VA ratings. For this reason, the VA star ratings were compared to another hospital rating service Compare VA Hospitals (2). This scale uses a 1-100 scale with 100 being the best. In this scale the Palo Alto turned out to be the best in the country with Phoenix and the VA being more in the middle of the pack. There was no correlation between the ratings ($r=0.2386$, $p>0.05$). This is consistent with a previous publication in the SWJPC which showed no or little correlation between the various hospital ratings.

The lack of correlation between rankings and not knowing the metrics which determine the rankings suggest that the VA is right, the rankings should remain

for an internal use rather than adding to the confusion already generated by the various hospital rankings.

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References

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