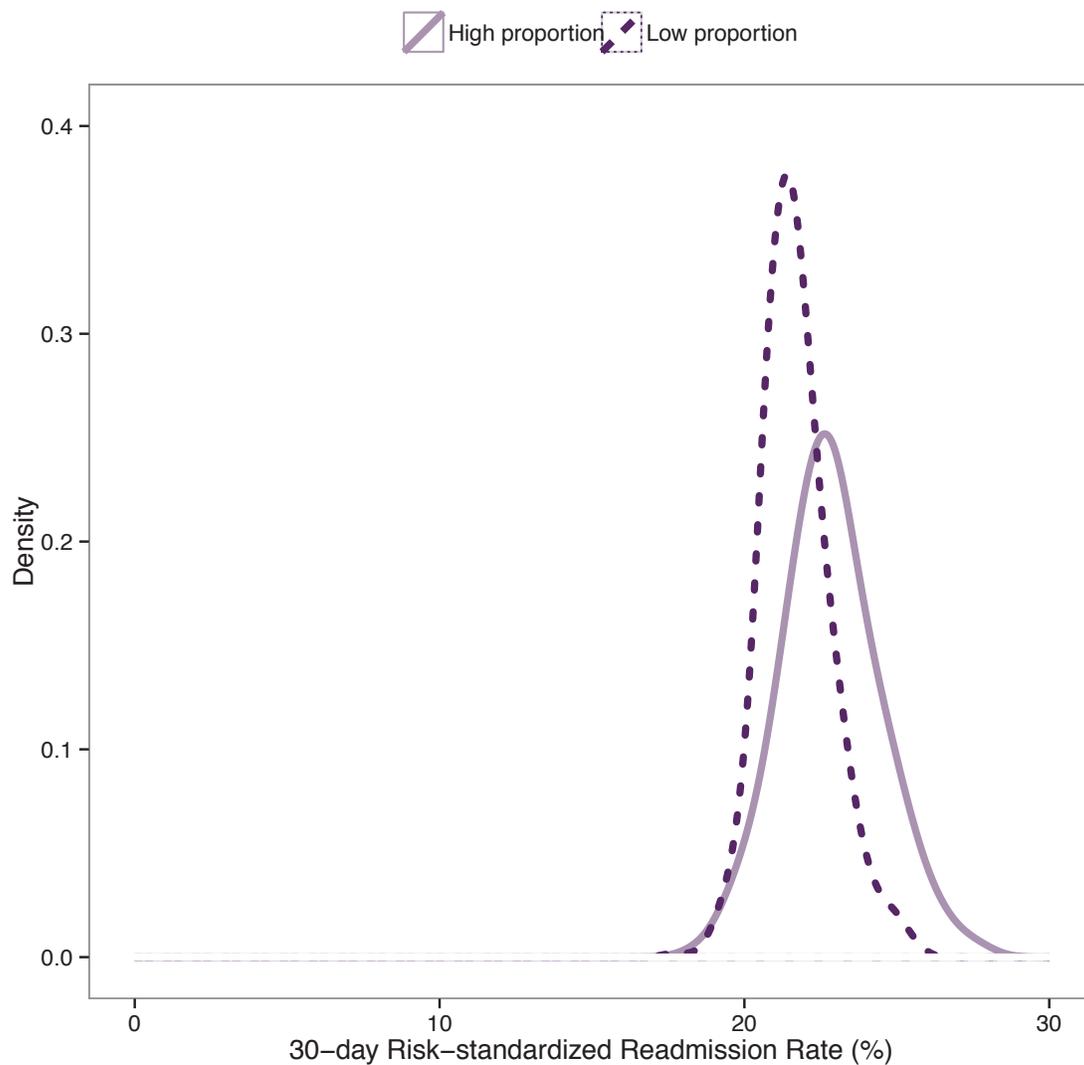


SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STATUS

► Performance on the heart failure readmission measure: **Hospitals that serve high and low proportions of African-American patients.**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) periodically investigates select hospital practices that may impact a hospital's performance on the following readmission measure: hospital-level 30-day risk-standardized readmission rate (RSRR) following heart failure [1]. The heart failure readmission measure includes Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) and Veterans Health Administration (VA) beneficiaries aged 65 or older [2]. The heart failure readmission measure assesses the occurrence of unplanned readmission for any cause within 30 days after discharge from hospitalization for heart failure [2]. The heart failure readmission measure has been publicly reported on [Hospital Compare](#) since 2009 and has been included in the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP) since 2012 [3].

FIGURE I Distributions of heart failure RSRRs (%) for hospitals with the lowest and highest proportions of African-American patients, July 2011-June 2014.



Prepared for CMS by Yale New Haven Health Services Corporation (YNHHSC) Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE) September 2015

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Variation in RSRRs reflects differences in performance among hospitals; lower RSRRs suggest better quality, and higher RSRRs suggest worse quality. To understand the impact of caring for African-American patients, we examined RSRRs among hospitals with high and low proportions of African-American patients. Therefore, we compared the heart failure RSRRs for the 566 hospitals with the lowest overall proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients (0% of a hospital's Medicare FFS patients) to the 385 hospitals with the highest proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients ($\geq 23.7\%$ of a hospital's Medicare FFS patients) for the July 2011 – June 2014 reporting period. Hospitals with the lowest and highest proportions of African-American patients are designated as those that fall within the lowest and highest deciles of all hospitals with 25 or more qualifying discharges, respectively. The proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients for each hospital was determined using the Medicare Part A Inpatient Claims from 2013. All hospitals with 0% African-American patients were included in the lowest decile. To ensure accurate assessment of each hospital, the heart failure readmission measure uses a statistical model to adjust for key differences in patient risk factors that are clinically relevant and that have a strong relationship with the readmission outcome [2]. Please note that VA hospitals are not included in this analysis.

TABLE I Distributions of heart failure RSRRs (%) for hospitals with the lowest and highest proportions of African-American patients, July 2011-June 2014.

	Heart failure RSRR (%)	
	Lowest proportion (0%) African-American patients; n=566	Highest proportion ($\geq 23.7\%$) African-American patients; n=385
Maximum	25.7	27.8
90%	23.2	24.9
75%	22.3	23.8
Median (50%)	21.6	22.8
25%	20.9	21.8
10%	20.5	20.9
Minimum	17.7	18.4

The median heart failure RSRR for hospitals with the highest proportion of African-American patients was 22.8% (interquartile range [IQR]: 21.8%-23.8%). The median heart failure RSRR for hospitals with the lowest proportion of African-American patients was 21.6% (IQR: 20.9%-22.3%; Figure 1 and Table 1).

Hospitals with the lowest proportion of African-American patients had a median heart failure RSRR that was 1.2 percentage points lower than hospitals with the highest proportion.

1. Medicare Hospital Quality Chartbook 2014: Performance Report on Outcome Measures. Prepared by Yale New Haven Health Services Corporation Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services 2014; <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/HospitalQualityInits/Downloads/Medicare-Hospital-Quality-Chartbook-2014.pdf>. Accessed 16 June 2015.

2. Dorsey K, Grady J, Desai N, et al. 2015 Condition-Specific Measures Updates and Specifications Report Hospital-Level 30-Day Risk-Standardized Readmission Measures: Acute Myocardial Infarction – Version 8.0, Heart Failure – Version 8.0, Pneumonia – Version 8.0, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – Version 4.0, Stroke – Version 4.0; <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPPage%2FQnetTier4&cid=1219069855841>. Accessed 26 June 2015.

3. “Hospital Inpatient Prospective Payment Systems for Acute Care Hospitals, Final Rule.” Federal Register / 22 August 2014; <http://federalregister.gov/a/2014-18545>. Accessed 16 June 2015.

Prepared for CMS by Yale New Haven Health Services Corporation (YNHHSC) Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (CORE) September 2015