

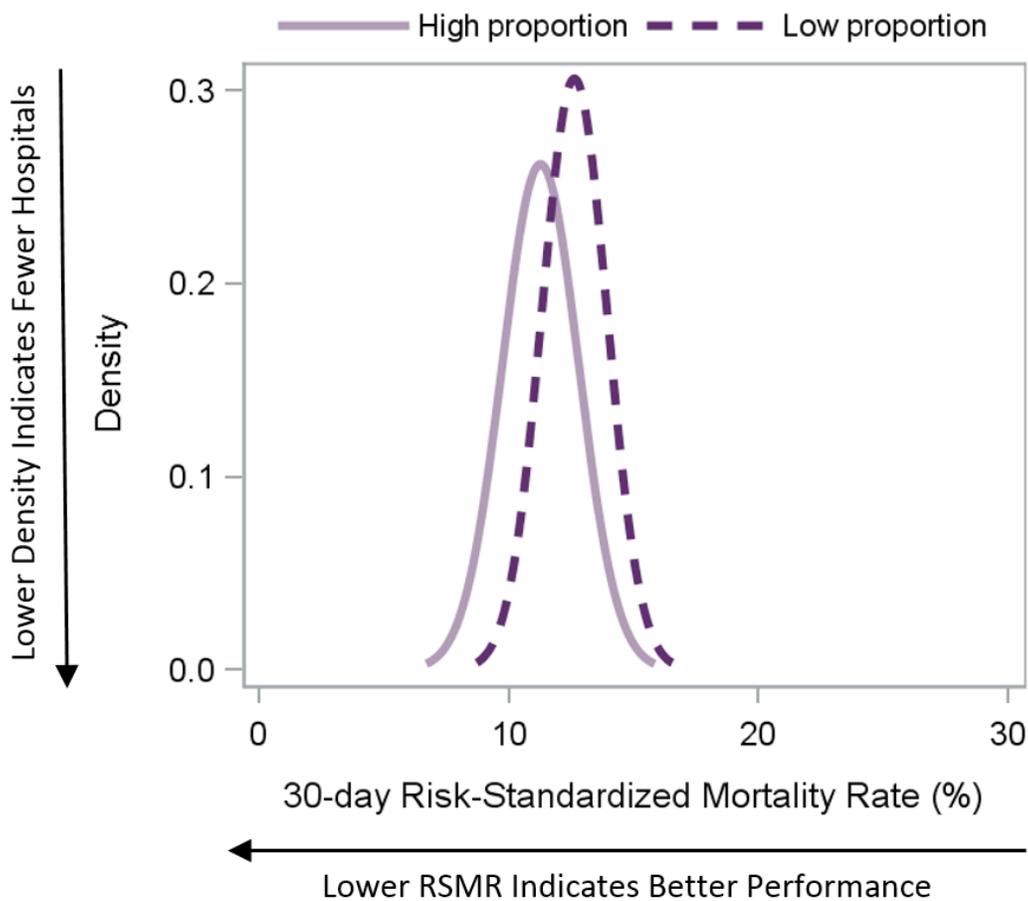
► **Performance on the heart failure mortality measure:** Hospitals that serve high and low proportions of African-American patients.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) evaluates hospital performance in relation to the proportion of African-American patients served in order to monitor patterns, changes, and potential unintended consequences in the measure results. This information allows CMS to better understand the current state of care in the U.S. hospitals.

The heart failure mortality measure includes Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) beneficiaries aged 65 or older and assesses the occurrence of death for any cause within 30 days after the date of hospital admission for heart failure [1].

CMS began publicly reporting 30-day risk-standardized mortality rates (RSMRs) following admissions for heart failure in 2007 [2]. Publicly reported measure results are updated annually on the [Hospital Compare](#) website. The heart failure mortality measure has been included in the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing (HVBP) program since 2014 [3].

FIGURE I. Distributions of heart failure RSMRs (%) for hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients, July 2013-June 2016.



SOCIAL RISK FACTORS

Variation in RSMRs reflects differences in performance among hospitals; lower RSMRs suggest better quality, and higher RSMRs suggest worse quality. To understand how caring for African-American patients might impact a hospital's RSMR, we examined RSMRs among hospitals with high and low proportions of African-American patients. We compared the heart failure RSMRs for the 476 hospitals with 0% African-American Medicare FFS patients to the 365 hospitals with $\geq 22.3\%$ African-American Medicare FFS patients for the July 2013 – June 2016 reporting period. We defined hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients as those that fall within the lowest and highest deciles of all hospitals with 25 or more qualifying admissions (N= 3,651). The proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients for each hospital was determined using the Medicare Part A Inpatient Claims from 2015. All hospitals with 0% African-American patients were included in the lowest decile. To ensure accurate assessment of each hospital, the heart failure mortality 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 mortality outcome [1].

TABLE I. Distributions of heart failure RSMRs (%) for hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients, July 2013-June 2016.

	Heart failure RSMR (%)	
	Hospitals with low proportions (0%) of African-American patients n = 476	Hospitals with high proportions ($\geq 22.3\%$) of African-American patients n = 365
Maximum	16.9	15.7
90%	14.3	13.1
75%	13.4	12.2
Median (50%)	12.4	11.2
25%	11.8	10.4
10%	11.1	9.3
Minimum	9.5	6.3

The median heart failure RSMR for hospitals with low proportions of African-American patients was 12.4% (interquartile range [IQR]: 11.8%- 13.4%; Figure 1 and Table 1). The median heart failure RSMR for hospitals with high proportions of African-American patients was 11.2% (IQR: 10.4%- 12.2%; Figure 1 and Table 1).

Hospitals with low proportions of African-American patients had a median heart failure RSMR that was 1.2 percentage points higher than that of hospitals with high proportions.

1. Jaymie Simoes, Jacqueline N. Grady, Jo DeBuhr, et al. 2017 Condition-Specific Measures Updates and Specifications Report Hospital-Level 30-Day Risk-Standardized Mortality Measures: Acute Myocardial Infarction – Version 11.0 Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – Version 6.0 Heart Failure – Version 11.0 Pneumonia – Version 11.0 Stroke – Version 6.0. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier4&cid=1163010421830>. Available as of April 4, 2017.

2. Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program Overview. QualityNet website. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier2&cid=1138115987129>. Accessed March 1, 2017.

3. Hospital Value-Based Purchasing Overview. QualityNet website. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier2&cid=1228772039937>. Accessed March 1, 2017.

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