

Benchmarking Assignment

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Benchmarking can be defined as the comparison of performances across organizations or institutions. Benchmarking helps organizations determine ways to improve their safety and quality by using metrics. In healthcare, key metrics that are typically compared or benchmarked include patient safety (such as pressure injuries and falls), outcomes (including infection and mortality rates), readmission rates, hospital stays, and patient satisfaction. The three hospitals I have chosen are Sentara Norfolk General Hospital (SNGH), Riverside Regional Medical Center (RRMC), and Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center (BSMMC). I chose these three hospitals due to their being very well known in the Tidewater area and having some clinical experience there. The four topics I have chosen to benchmark between those three hospitals are ED wait times, pneumonia death rates, HCAHPS (patient satisfaction), and heart failure death rates.

In the hospital, it is very important to have lower wait times in the emergency department. Research has shown that patients have better outcomes when they are seen faster. A research study aiming to determine whether ED wait times affect patient experiences/outcomes concluded “prolonged ED waiting times were significantly associated with worse patient experience in patients who were discharged from the ED and in inpatients with short LOS” (Nyce et al., 2021). Per Medicare.gov, the average emergency department wait time before leaving from the visit across the nation is 203 minutes, and across Virginia is 169 minutes. Sentara Norfolk General Hospital has an average emergency department wait time of around 108. In comparison, Riverside Regional Medical Center has an average time of 236 minutes, and Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center has a wait time of 166 minutes. The percentage of patients who left the ED without being seen at SNGH was four percent, RRMC was four percent, and BSMMC was only one percent. Overall, Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center has the best ranking for emergency department wait times.

Pneumonia is a serious infection in the lungs that causes inflammation in the alveoli. The pneumonia death rates are important to benchmark because they can be a direct reflection of the quality of care, timely care, and preventative care. Per Medicare.gov, the national death rate for pneumonia patients is 16.2%. At Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, 299 patients were included in the results, which showed a slightly lowered death rate for pneumonia patients at 14.2%. Riverside Regional Medical Center's death rate was worse than the national average at 19.7% and included 583 patients. Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center included 230 patients and showed a slightly worse rating compared to the national average at 17.3%. Overall, Sentara Norfolk General Hospital has the lowest rate of death in pneumonia patients among the three hospitals, and lower than the national percentage.

HCAHPS can be defined as “a national, standardized, publicly reported survey of patients' perspectives of hospital care” (CMS.gov). HCAHPS uses a five-star rating to summarize patient experiences, which leads to providing important information when choosing a hospital. Per Medicare.gov, all three hospitals have a 3-star HCAHPS rating. One of the areas under HCAHPS is “patients who report yes, they would definitely recommend the hospital,” with a national average of 71% and a Virginia average of 70%. The rating of Sentara Norfolk General Hospital is above both the national and state averages at 77%. Riverside Regional Medical Center is slightly above both the national and state averages at 72%. Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center is significantly below both averages at 56%. Overall, Sentara has the better ranking under this section of the HCAHPS star rating, and Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center has the worst.

Heart failure is a serious medical condition where the heart is not working properly. This condition is seen commonly among patients across hospitals, and the death rates reflect how well

a hospital can manage this common diagnosis. Per Medicare.gov, the national rate for heart failure death is 11.6%. Sentara Norfolk General has a rating slightly lower than the national rate at 10% that included 676 patients. Riverside Regional Medical Center has a rating slightly higher than the national rate at 13.7% that included 683 patients. Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center has a rating higher than the national average at 14.5% that included 325 patients. Overall, based on percentages, Sentara Norfolk General has the lowest rating of heart failure deaths most recently reported.

Based on these findings, I chose to develop a plan of improvement for pneumonia death rates at Riverside Regional Medical Center. As stated above, in comparison to national pneumonia death rates, Riverside Regional Medical Center is 3.5% higher. The first step in the plan of improvement would be prevention. Hospital-acquired pneumonia (HAP) can be defined as “a hospital complication that’s diagnosed when patients demonstrate signs and symptoms of pneumonia 48 or more hours after hospital admission” (Meehan and McKenna, 2020). A few ways to prevent HAP are infection transmission prevention, use of incentive spirometry, sedation restriction, breathing exercises, chest physical therapy, oral hygiene, and early mobilization (AHRQ, 2025). Early recognition would be next in the plan of improvement. There are improved patient survival outcomes when the patient is diagnosed early or when the patient is identified to be at high risk (Grudzinska et al., 2019). If a patient is identified early, appropriate healthcare personnel can initiate protocols/bundles to prevent complications. Properly treating bacterial pneumonia with correct antibiotics and administering them in a timely manner is crucial to improved patient survival (Kato, 2024). Overall, Riverside Regional Medical Center can benefit from these best practices to decrease its pneumonia death rates.

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Data Analysis Chart

Hospital	ED wait times	Pneumonia death rates	HCAHPS ratings	Heart failure death rates
Sentara Norfolk General Hospital (SNGH)	National: 203 minutes State: 169 minutes	National: 16.2%	*out of star rating and based on criteria discussed above* National criteria: 71% State criteria: 70%	National: 11.6%
Riverside Regional Medical Center (RRMC)	236 minutes	14.2%	3 stars out of 5 77%	10%
		19.7%	3 stars out of 5 72%	13.7%

Bon Secours Maryview Medical Center (BSMMC)	166 minutes	17.3%	3 stars out of 5 56%	14.5%
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