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## Errors still costing Medicare billions: HealthGrades study

Story posted: April 8, 2008 - 3:00 pm EDT



April 7, 2008

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Some 1.12 million patient-safety incidents occurred in 41 million hospitalizations among Medicare patients, costing the country's largest payer \$8.8 billion between 2004 and 2006, according to a HealthGrades study.

Those incidents resulted in more than 238,000 potentially preventable deaths, according to the Golden, Colo.-based research company's study. This is HealthGrades' fifth annual Patient Safety in American Hospitals **report**. The study also noted some improvements: The all-cause mortality rate among Medicare patients who experienced a patient-safety incident decreased to 25.99% from 27.62% over the same period. HealthGrades analyzes patient-safety incident rates using the Agency for Health Research and Quality's Patient Safety Indicators methodology.

Last year, HealthGrades found there were **1.16 million preventable incidents**, nearly 248,000 preventable deaths and \$8.6 billion in preventable costs for Medicare patients between 2003 and 2005.

The 2008 study also identified 259 hospitals as the top 5% performers of nearly 5,000 hospitals evaluated. The facilities, named Distinguished Hospitals for Patient Safety, can serve as benchmarks for comparing other hospitals, HealthGrades said. -- by [Jean DerGurahian](#)

**What do you think?** Post a comment on this article and share your opinion with other readers. Submit your comments to *Modern Healthcare Online* at [mheditorial@crain.com](mailto:mheditorial@crain.com). Please be sure to include your hometown and state, along with your organization and title.

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