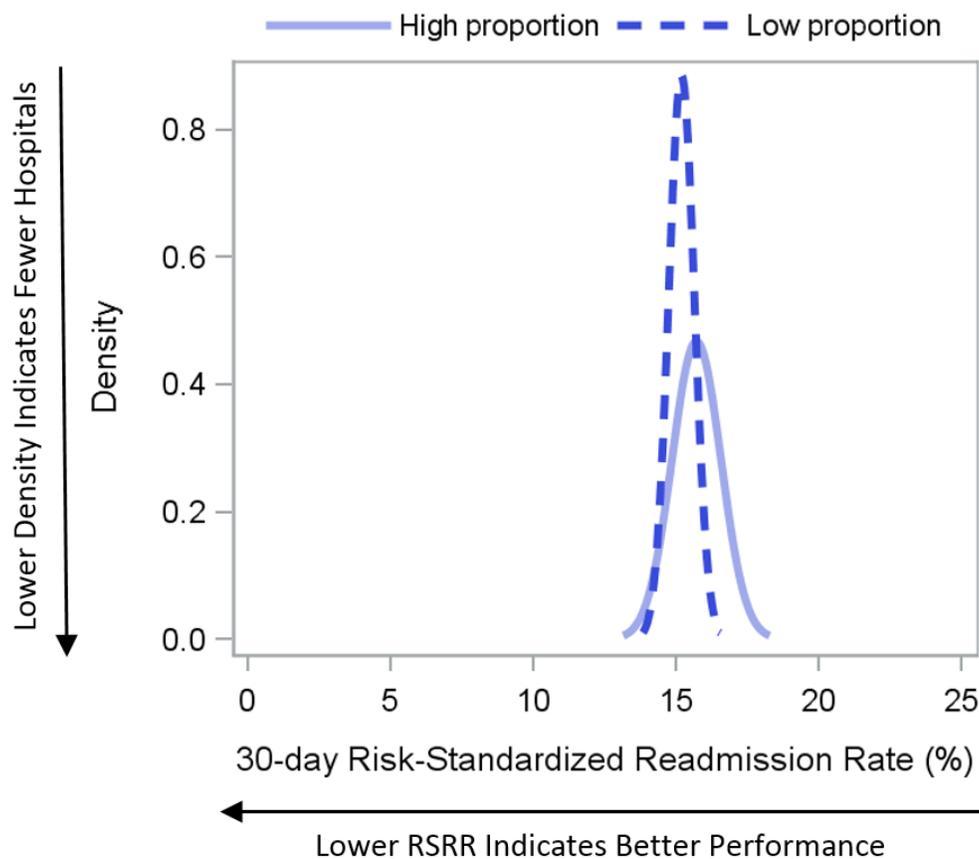▶ **Performance on the hospital-wide readmission measure:** Hospitals that serve high and low proportions of African-American patients.

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 within U.S. hospitals.

The hospital-wide readmission measure assesses the occurrence of unplanned readmission for any cause within 30 days after discharge from a hospitalization for admissions admitted for any condition or procedure for Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) beneficiaries aged 65 or older [1].

CMS began publicly reporting hospital-wide 30-day risk-standardized readmission rates (RSRRs) in 2013 [2]. Publicly reported measure results are updated annually on the *Hospital Compare* website.

FIGURE I. *Distributions of hospital-wide RSRRs (%) for hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients, July 2015 – June 2016.*

Variation in risk-standardized readmission rates (RSRRs) reflects differences in performance among hospitals; lower RSRRs suggest better quality, and higher RSRRs suggest worse quality. To understand how caring for African-American patients might impact a hospital's RSRR, we examined RSRRs among hospitals with high and low proportions of African-American patients. We compared the hospital-wide RSRRs for the 926 hospitals with 0% African-American Medicare FFS patients to the 453 hospitals with ≥21.1% African-American Medicare FFS patients for the July 2015 – 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 discharges (N= 4,526). 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 hospital-wide 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 [1].

TABLE I. *Distributions of hospital-wide RSRRs (%) for hospitals with low and high proportions of African-American patients, July 2015 – June 2016.*

	Hospital-wide RSRR (%)	
	Hospitals with low proportions (0%) of African-American patients n = 926	Hospitals with high proportions (≥ 21.1%) of African-American patients n = 453
Maximum	17.2	19.0
90%	15.8	16.9
75%	15.4	16.3
Median (50%)	15.2	15.6
25%	15.0	15.2
10%	14.7	14.7
Minimum	13.3	13.2

The median hospital-wide RSRR for hospitals with low proportions of African-American patients was 15.2% (interquartile range [IQR]: 15.0%- 15.4%; Figure 1 and Table 1). The median hospital-wide RSRR for hospitals with high proportions of African-American patients was 15.6% (IQR: 15.2%- 16.3%; Figure 1 and Table 1).

Hospitals with low proportions of African-American patients had a median hospital-wide RSRR that was 0.4 percentage points lower than hospitals with high proportions.

1. Jaymie Simoes, Jacqueline N. Grady, Jo DeBuhr, et al. 2017 All-Cause Hospital-Wide Measure Updates and Specifications Report: Hospital-Level 30-Day Risk-Standardized Readmission Measure – Version 6.0. https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier4&cid=1219069855841. 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.