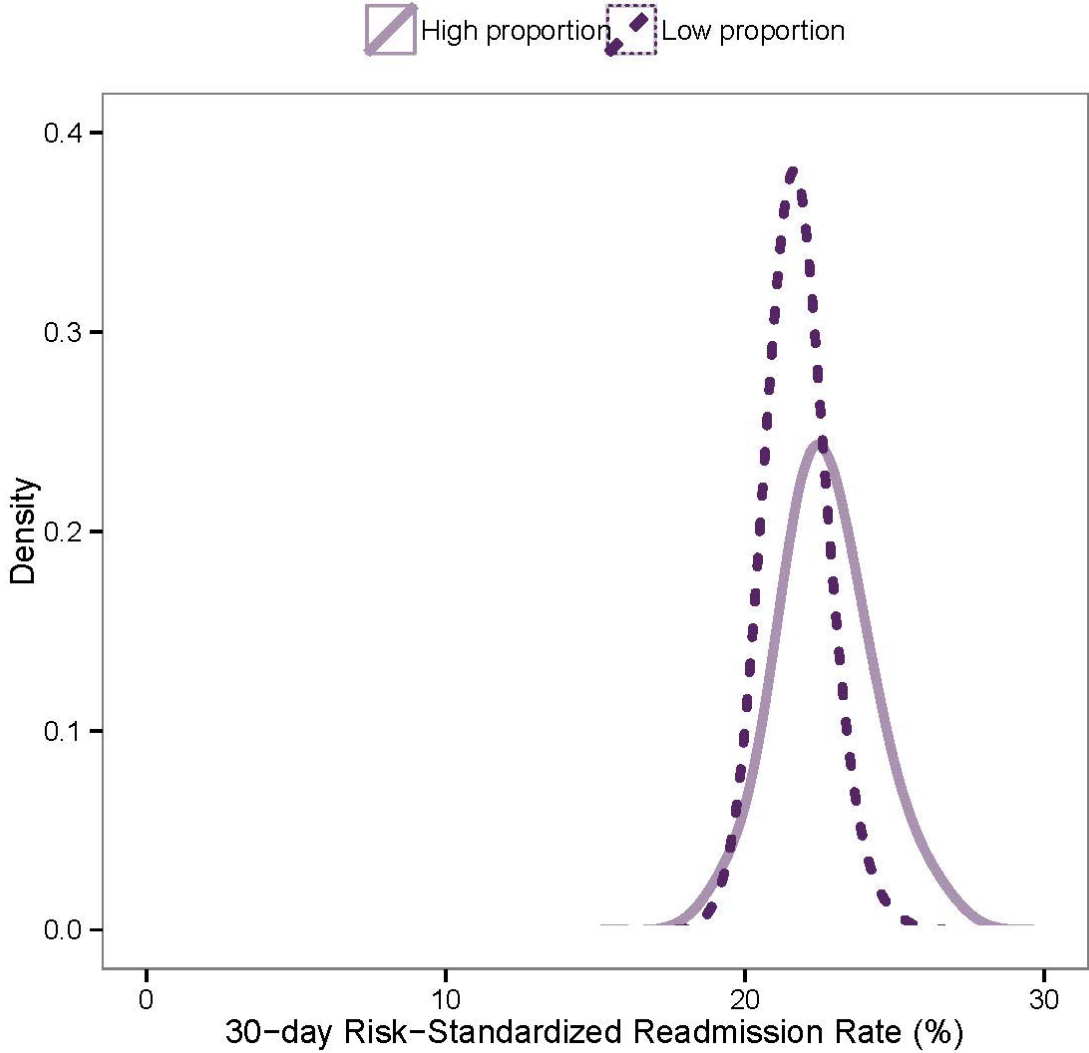


SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STATUS

► 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) beneficiaries aged 65 or older and assesses the occurrence of unplanned readmission for any cause within 30 days after the date of 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, 4].

FIGURE I. Distributions of heart failure RSRRs (%) for hospitals with the lowest and highest proportions of African-American patients, July 2012-June 2015.



Prepared for CMS by Yale New Haven Health Services Corporation – Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation (YNHHC/CORE) September 2016



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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 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 heart failure RSRRs for the 533 hospitals with the lowest overall proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients (0% of a hospital's Medicare FFS patients) to the 379 hospitals with the highest proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients ($\geq 23.1\%$ of a hospital's Medicare FFS patients) for the July 2012 – June 2015 reporting period. We defined hospitals with the lowest and highest proportions of African-American patients as those that fall within the lowest and highest deciles of all hospitals with 25 or more qualifying admissions. The proportion of African-American Medicare FFS patients for each hospital was determined using the Medicare Part A Inpatient Claims from 2014. 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].

TABLE I. Distributions of heart failure RSRRs (%) for hospitals with the lowest and highest proportions of African-American patients, July 2012-June 2015.

	Heart failure RSRR (%)	
	Lowest proportion (0%) African-American patients; n=533	Highest proportion ($\geq 23.1\%$) African-American patients; n=379
Maximum	25.3	27.2
90%	23.0	24.8
75%	22.3	23.6
Median (50%)	21.7	22.6
25%	21.1	21.7
10%	20.5	20.8
Minimum	18.9	18.7

The median heart failure RSRR for hospitals with the lowest proportion of African-American patients was 21.7% (interquartile range [IQR]: 21.1%-22.3%). The median heart failure RSRR for hospitals with the highest proportion of African-American patients was 22.6% (IQR: 21.7%-23.6%; Figure 1 and Table 1).

Hospitals with the lowest proportion of African-American patients had a median heart failure RSRR that was 0.9 percentage points lower than hospitals with the highest proportion.

1. 2015 Medicare Hospital Quality Chartbook. Prepared by Yale New Haven Health Services Corporation Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/quality-initiatives-patient-assessment-instruments/hospitalqualityinits/outcomemeasures.html>. Accessed March 1, 2016.

2. Dorsey, K., Grady, J. N., Desai, N., et al. 2016 Condition-Specific Measures Updates and Specifications Report Hospital-Level 30-Day Risk-Standardized Readmission Measures: Acute Myocardial Infarction – Version 9.0, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – Version 5.0, Heart Failure – Version 9.0, Pneumonia – Version 9.0, Stroke – Version 5.0. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier4&cid=1219069855841>. Accessed May 9, 2016.

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4. Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program Overview. QualityNet website. <https://www.qualitynet.org/dcs/ContentServer?c=Page&pagename=QnetPublic%2FPage%2FQnetTier2&cid=1228772412458>. Accessed March 1, 2016.