FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Study shows VA surgical care better than or equal to non-VA hospitals

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced VA hospitals outperform or match neighboring non-VA hospitals in surgical quality and overall patient safety satisfaction.

The finding comes from a study conducted by VA and university researchers that was published June 26, in the *Journal of Surgical Research*.

"The prospect of having surgery can be stressful," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "For Veterans, who often have choices in where they receive care, it is in their best interest to make fully informed health care decisions. This study provides valuable information when faced with such an important choice."

Researchers at the White River Junction VA Medical Center in Vermont and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in New Hampshire completed the study. They identified VA medical centers with at least one non-VA hospital within 25 miles in three U.S. regions: West-Southwest, New England and Deep South.

With a sample of 34 VA facilities and 319 neighboring non-VA hospitals, the researchers used benchmarks created by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. They also used scores from the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems. The results showed VA facilities performed better or as good as non-VA hospitals in overall patient safety indicators (PSIs), which measure potential hospital complications and adverse events following surgeries and other procedures. VA hospitals performed much better in surgery specific PSIs.

The researchers also found VA and non-VA hospitals were about equal in patient satisfaction with overall hospital experience.

The data was collected from Hospital Compare, a publicly available database that helps consumers decide where to seek health care. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services runs the database.

Visit VA's Office of Research and Development.

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