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Temple, Jeff, Fox Chase tops in new hospital cancer care report

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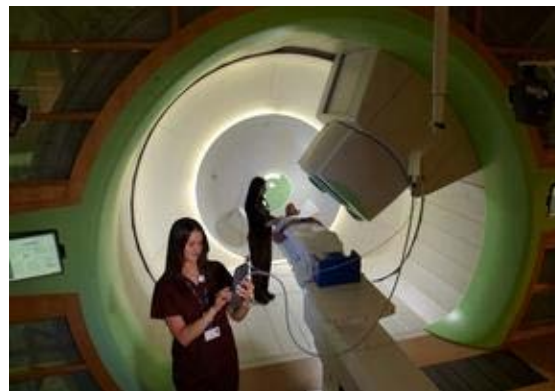


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The [Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health](#) has released its first regional report on hospital inpatient cancer care services in southeastern Pennsylvania.

[Neil Goldfarb](#), the coalition's president and CEO, said the report — the result of more than two years of work conducted by the organization in a partnership with the Health Care Improvement Foundation and a committee of advisers — was sent to the coalition's 44 employer members.

"We wanted to produce a report on cancer service performance measurements relevant for consumers when faced with a diagnosis of cancer," Goldfarb said.



Penn's Roberts Proton Beam Therapy Center at the Abramson Cancer Center in Philadelphia.

The preparation of analysis, he said, began by looking at the availability of measures of hospital quality and safety, both in general and specific to cancer care. From that, they selected six main measures that were presented in the study. Each medical center was given a score that reflects the extent to which hospitals were “top performers.” The six measures were: patient volume, hospital safety, compliance with cancer clinical care standards, nursing care excellence, patient care experience and cancer care clinical quality.

The report, which encompasses 34 area hospitals, gives its top score — five stars — to three Philadelphia hospitals: Fox Chase Cancer Center, which is part of the [Temple University Health System](#); the [Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania](#), which operates the [Abramson Cancer Center](#); and [Thomas Jefferson University Hospital](#), which operates the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center.

Twelve hospitals from the city and the surrounding suburban counties received one star — meaning they were not a top performer in any of the six measures. That list consisted of Abington-Lansdale, Brandywine, Chestnut Hill, Delaware County Memorial, Holy Redeemer, Jeanes, Mercy Fitzgerald, Mercy Suburban, Methodist, Nazareth, Phoenixville and Pottstown Memorial hospitals.

The hospital community said it is still reviewing the new report and how the information was compiled.

“Pennsylvania hospitals support efforts to increase health care transparency,” stated the Hospital & Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP), a Harrisburg-based trade group, in a prepared statement. “They recognize the importance of consumers having multiple sources of information available to make informed health care choices. Consumers should not accept one report as their sole source of information.

“The southeastern Pennsylvania region is home to world-class health

care and providers that offer innovative, lifesaving treatments," HAP said. "As new reports are increasingly being created, it's important that consumers talk to their trusted provider about these ratings and discuss any concerns they may have. This report is new and uses a new way of rating hospitals based on a compilation of different hospital ratings. HAP currently is reviewing the methodology and data used to create the report."

Conshohocken, Pennsylvania-based Mercy Health System — the parent company for Mercy Fitzgerald and Nazareth hospitals and the former parent of Mercy Suburban — issued the following statement when asked about the report:

"The Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health report is new and uses a new way of rating hospitals based on a compilation of hospital characteristics. As with any new report, we will need time to review the methodology, absorb the results, and determine the accuracy of the information, as what has been presented is not aligned with the robustness of some of our service offerings. This report is one source, but not the sole source of information about cancer care quality and safety."

Mercy went on to say the health system is committed to providing cancer care delivered with "equal parts respect, compassion and the most advanced cancer treatment available" at its comprehensive cancer treatment programs at Mercy Fitzgerald, Mercy Philadelphia and Nazareth hospitals that support patients "through the entire continuum of care from diagnosis to survivorship."

The health system also noted, Mercy Fitzgerald and Mercy Philadelphia hospitals are accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, and Nazareth Hospital is in the process of submitting data to gain accreditation.

Pottstown Memorial also issued a statement in which hospital officials

noted its regional cancer center treats the majority of its patients on an outpatient basis, while this report primarily assesses inpatient care. The hospital also said its program is a "nationally recognized community cancer center, and one of the first to receive 'accreditation with commendation plus outstanding achievement award' from the American College of Surgeons for the last four cycles. This means we have met the rigorous national standards of cancer care required by the ACoS over the last 12-plus years."

"In addition, [the cancer center] is proud to be a Fox Chase Cancer Center Partner, and continually scores well-above national average on The Pennsylvania Health Care Quality Alliance cancer care measures. We remain committed to providing patients with high quality, compassionate care and offer oncology resources close to home. We value transparency and consumer knowledge about the quality of care and experience provided by our hospital. In making decisions about where to seek care, we encourage patients to speak with their physician and consider the best sources for information," Pottstown Memorial stated.

The Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health said in addition to compiling scores based on the six key performance measures, they also surveyed hospitals to learn more about the cancer-related services that they offer such as weekend and evening appointments, care coordination and transportation. The report summarizes the results for the 21 hospitals that completed the survey.

Goldfarb said before it was released, the report was pilot tested in a focus group with employees for one of the coalition's members. The employees all said the report was helpful, he said, and some of their feedback was incorporated into the report's final version. The coalition also sent a preview version to local hospitals, from whom not all of the feedback was positive, he said.

The coalition, Goldfarb said, recognized that the limited amount of

comparable data creates limitations for such an analysis, but it believes the information in the report is objective and potentially helpful to purchasers and consumers.

"We used the best available measures in the public domain," he said. "We don't think the report is the 'be all and end all,' but it's start."

The Greater Philadelphia Coalition on Health, founded in 2012, represents the employer community with a mission of working with health plans, health care providers, and others to improve the value of health benefit spending by improving health care quality and safety and reducing health care costs.