

ORMC named a top state hospital in Ga. Trend

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Officials with Oconee Regional Medical Center in Milledgeville, have learned that the local hospital recently was named the second top medium-sized hospital in Georgia of 2016.

An article about the rankings of hospitals across the Peach State is featured in the current December issue of Georgia Trend Magazine.

The magazine groups hospitals into one of four categories. They include Teaching Hospitals, Large Hospitals, Medium Hospitals and Small Hospitals.

Top hospitals in each of those four categories were ranked based on their Total Performance Score, which was calculated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services using information on the clinical process of care, patient experience of care, outcome

and efficiency.

Georgia Trend's rankings, according to this month's article, reveals that the rankings include only the hospitals that participate in the CMS Hospital/Value Based Purchasing program (HVPB).

ORMC's ranking falls just shy of Washington County Regional Medical Center in neighboring Sandersville, which was named the state's top hospital in that same category.

Just a year ago, ORMC was ranked 12th on the list of top mid-sized hospitals in Georgia. Since 2012, the local hospital has placed in the top 25 hospitals in the state.

Dr. Phyllis Parks-Veal, who serves as chairwoman of the Oconee Regional Medical Center Inc. hospital board of directors is one of the many officials affiliated with the local hospital and pleased to learn about the latest recognition.

"We have wonderful and dedicated staff members who work tirelessly to provide excellent healthcare for our patients," Parks-Veal said. "They continue to amaze me with their outstanding performance and I am very proud of this accomplishment."

Deborah L. Block, who serves as vice-president and chief nursing officer at ORMC, also was pleased about the hospital's latest achievement.

"Given the challenges of rural health care in general and ORMC, specifically, continuing to place high quality and safe patient care as job Number One by all of the ORMC staff, is testament to the commitment of each person who touches each patient each day," Block said.

When the local hospital experienced financial woes and a lay-off of some of its employees, Block said staff members could

easily have buckled under such circumstances.

"But instead, we all held our heads high and carried out our primary mission — patient care," Block pointed out, "ORMC continues to be saddled with the stigma of the Baldwin County Hospital, and the fact that ORMC has been ranked as one of the top 25 hospitals consistently since 2012 further demonstrates that those days are gone and should be forgotten."

Another aspect to consider about the prestigious ranking that ORMC recently received is where the data originated to make such an accomplishment possible.

"This is accurate and valid data that comes from Centers for Medicare/Medicaid (CMS)," Block said. "This is not something that can be manipulated internally. This is outcome data obtained directly from the medical record by our

Quality Department and submitted to CMS."

Block said current and future payments are driven by the results.

"For every Medicare dollar, CMS will either withhold a portion if outcomes are not within the safety guidelines or award additional payments if and when the outcomes are better than the established thresholds," Block said. "Thankfully, we're in the category of receiving additional dollars and only very minor take backs."

In fiscal year 2016 more than \$120,000 was received, while

the take backs were limited to \$7,000 during that same period, Block said.

"Having a high-quality, top-ranked hospital in the community is a vital resource when it comes to attracting new business, new citizens, students, visitors, etc.," she added.

The top Teaching Hospital in the state was Emory University Hospital in Atlanta.

The top Large Hospital in the state was WellStar West Georgia Medical Center in LaGrange.

The top Small Hospital in the state was Coffee Regional Medical Center in Douglas.

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