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In 2022, Nurses at Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City care for a COVID-19 patient in ICU. A healthcare watchdog group gave Kansas City hospitals grades for patient safety.

Ratings list KC-area's safest hospitals

BY JOSEPH HERNANDEZ
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Fewer Kansas City-area hospitals are considered safe this spring than last fall, the latest report from The Leapfrog Group finds.

The organization, which has given hospitals letter grades on patient safety for over 20 years, released its spring 2026 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades.

Twice a year, hospitals are evaluated in 32 areas grouped in five categories: infections; problems with surgery; safety problems; practices to prevent errors; and staffing levels and education. The nonprofit gets data from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, alongside a Leapfrog survey.

The survey's overall grades range from A to F, and the Kansas City area once again did not have any D or F facilities. It has fewer A-grades in the latest results, dropping from the seven recorded in November 2025 to five recorded in May.

Here are the Kansas City-area hospitals with the best and worst patient safety ratings for spring 2026, according to Leapfrog Group.

SAFEST HOSPITALS IN THE KANSAS CITY AREA (A GRADES)

AdventHealth South Overland Park Hospital, 7820 W 165th St.

AdventHealth South Overland Park Hospital scored above average in 14 out of 32 categories, including the best possible score on doctors, nursing and hospital staff, looking at nursing and bedside care for patients and the responsiveness of hospital staff.

It also received an A grade in fall 2025's report.

Liberty Hospital, 2525 Glenn Hendren Drive

Liberty Hospital scored above average in 15 out of 32 categories, including the best possible score on doctors, nursing and hospital staff. Every category under the "Practices to Prevent Errors" tab received an above average grade, reviewing the hospital's handwashing techniques and safeness in administering medicine.

The hospital last received an overall A grade in spring 2023.

Saint Luke's East Hospital, 100 NE St. Lukes Blvd., Lee's Summit

Saint Luke's East Hospital scored above average in 17 out of 32 categories, but some categories were not measured. It received the best possible

score for "Practices to Prevent Errors," reviewing the hospital's abilities to order medications through computers and how the staff works together to prevent errors.

The hospital has received A grades during the last three reports dating back to fall 2024.

Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City, 4401 Wornall Road

Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City scored above average in 14 out of 32 categories, including the best possible score under the "Problems with Surgery" tab.

The hospital received A grades in both reports in 2025.

St. Mary's Medical Center, 201 NW R.D. Mize Road, Blue Springs

St. Mary's Medical Center scored above average in 10 out of 32 categories. It received an above average score in the "Safety Problems" tab, based on hospital care related to patient falls and injuries or air or gas bubbles found in blood.

The hospital received an A grade in fall 2025's report and a B-grade in spring 2025's report.

KC-AREA HOSPITALS THAT RECEIVED B GRADES

Here are the hospitals

that received B grades in The Leapfrog Group's latest report:

- AdventHealth Shawnee Mission, 9100 W. 74th St.,
- Belton Regional Medical Center, 17065 S. Outer Road
- Centerpoint Medical Center, 19600 E. 39th St., Independence
- Lee's Summit Medical Center, 2100 SE Blue Parkway
- Providence Medical Center, 8929 Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, Kansas
- Saint Luke's South Hospital, 12300 Metcalf Ave., Overland Park
- St. Joseph Medical Center, 1000 Carondelet Drive, Kansas City
- University Health Lakewood Medical Center, 7900 Lees Summit Road, Kansas City
- University Health Truman Medical Center, 2301 Holmes St., Kansas City

MOST UNSAFE HOSPITALS IN THE KANSAS CITY AREA (C GRADES)

Six Kansas City-area hospitals received C grades in The Leapfrog Group's latest report:

- Menorah Medical Center, 5721 W. 119th St., Overland Park
- North Kansas City Hospital, 2800 Clay Edwards Drive
- Olathe Medical Center, 20333 W. 151st St.
- Overland Park Regional Medical Center, 10500 Quivira Road
- Research Medical Center Main Campus, 2316 E. Meyer Blvd., Kansas City
- Saint Luke's North Hospital Barry Road, 5830 NW Barry Road

The University of Kansas Hospital, 4000 Cambridge St. in Kansas City, Kansas, did not receive a grade for spring 2026. The hospital has received only C grades for the past five assessments.

As for the distribution of grades across the state, 25% of Kansas hospitals earned A grades, higher than the 23% recorded in fall 2025. Missouri also improved, with 19% of its hospitals earning A grades compared to the 17% in fall 2025's report.

The nonprofit does not release grades for VA hospitals, mental health facilities, free-standing pediatric hospitals and some specialty facilities, like surgery centers and cancer hospitals.

would likely be affected by the reclassification.

The email said "additional tranches" of conversions would follow. The official said there would be no mass layoffs at the department beyond those previously announced.

Trump pledged in his campaign to strip job protections from federal workers deemed by his team to be "influencing" government policy. Governance experts say the change will make it easier to carry out more mass layoffs.

Unions representing federal workers have challenged the move in federal court.

The Trump administration has sought to shrink the federal workforce and make civil servants and historically independent boards and commissions more accountable to the White House.

Missouri passes 'born alive' bill, ranking both sides of abortion debate

BY JACK HARVEL
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Missouri lawmakers have approved an anti-abortion bill that is expected to be struck down by the courts, according to anti-abortion activists.

The "Born Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act" was voted out of the House on Wednesday, which would make it a crime not to provide life-saving aid to a child after a failed abortion. Health care providers could face the death penalty under the legislation.

A similar bill was the first to make it out of the House this legislative session, but in its current state, it ranked members of both the abortion rights movement and the anti-abortion movement.

It will now go to Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe, who is expected to sign it into law.

Lawmakers who support abortion rights characterized the bill as a solution to a non-issue, predicated on scenarios that do not exist. They point to the state's existing laws on infanticide as sufficient to charge someone if they don't provide medical care to a child born after an attempted abortion.

"It is already against the law to not render care to a child born alive, that is already established," said Pattie Mansur, a Kansas City Democrat. "This bill is actually about threatening physicians at a time when Missouri is struggling to hang on to physicians."

But the underlying problem for anti-abortion advocates comes from Senate amendments that added a slew of provisions to the bill. What started as a single subject anti-abortion bill now includes laws about being bonded out of jail, modifying the definition of certain criminal offenses and granting prosecutors the ability to request assistance from the Attorney General.

"The effect of it is that it's no longer a single subject; it's multiple subjects," said Samuel Lee, director of Campaign Life Missouri. "The original purpose of the bill has been changed, and for those two reasons, the courts have struck those down because that violates the Missouri constitution."

"I certainly hope that I'm wrong in my analysis," Lee said.

Missouri has a single-subject clause, meaning bills that delve into multiple topics can be chal-

lenged as unconstitutional. It also has a non-severability clause, meaning that if any one piece of the legislation is struck down, the rest of the bill is voided.

Rep. Brian Seitz, a Branson Republican, defended the bill on the House floor on Wednesday as carefully written.

"This bill retains the integrity of the initial legislation," Seitz said.

Rep. Bryant Wolfen, a Ste. Genevieve Republican, who often raises issues about rules on the House floor, said he supported the original bill but took issue with the final bill that passed.

"We are going to violate the Constitution," Wolfen said.

DEBATE GETS HEATED

The bill, which passed 102-46, was fiercely debated on the House floor.

House Minority Leader Ashley Aune, a Kansas City Democrat, accused Seitz of being "a sad old man who cosplays as Superman when he's not busy controlling women's bodies."

Seitz, in turn, called Aune's remarks "satanic mockery" and that they were "reflective of the modern Democrat Party that they would kill or allow to be killed a live, born child."

The final vote was interrupted by a handful of abortion rights activists chanting from the gallery. Maggie Olivia, policy director for Abortion Action Missouri, said the protest was to "make clear to these politicians that the Show Me State has already shown how we feel about abortion."

Kansas City is sandwiched between two states where abortion is protected, but opposed by the legislative bodies that govern the states.

Missouri voters overturned the state's ban on abortion in 2024, which established a constitutional right to abortion. However, full access has been slow to materialize due to ongoing court battles.

Voters will again be asked this year to repeal that section of the Missouri Constitution and ban abortion in a lawmaker-initiated ballot measure.

In 2022, Kansas voters rejected a legislatively-referred constitutional amendment that would have banned abortion. This year, Kansas voters will be asked to amend the state constitution to allow the direct election of Kansas Supreme Court Justices, which has been justified by supporters over the court's abortion decisions.

Hundreds at health department may lose job protections

BY AHMED ABouleNEIN
Reuters

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration expects hundreds of senior U.S. Department of Health and Human Services employees to lose their civil service job protections under a role reclassification plan, according to an emailed memo reviewed by Reuters.

HHS employees at several agencies received the memo, which said positions on their teams

would be reclassified. The change means people in those roles can be fired at will. Previously, they could be fired only for cause and had appeal rights.

The move is in line with an overhaul announced by the administration in February of the government's civil service system.

The overhaul gives the president more power to hire and fire up to 50,000 career federal employees who would be reclassified to Schedule Policy/Career, formerly known as Schedule F

during his first term.

An HHS official confirmed the email's authenticity but did not respond to questions about how many staff would be affected and their agencies and positions. The category of employees involved, GS-15, usually consists of senior technical experts, managers, high-level policy staff and supervisors.

The email said that initially "a relatively modest number ... on the order of hundreds not thousands" of HHS personnel in that category

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