

## What about the hospital?

It's easy to forget about hospital characteristics when focusing on assignment location and amount of pay. However, the characteristics of a hospital can make a difference in your travel experience. When you call a travel company to inquire about an assignment, they will tell you where the assigned hospital is located and how many beds it has. However, how do you find out more about where you might be working?

If you are a new aspiring nurse, you may want to work at some of the more prestigious hospitals. If you are a highly specialized nurse, you may want to work in facilities with the latest technology and research in your specialty. For example, if you are an oncology nurse, wouldn't it be great to work at the leading cancer center in the United States? After working in a facility like that, you would have valuable knowledge on the latest and greatest procedures and tests.

Every year, U.S. News publishes the Americas Best Hospitals. You can go to their website and view their rankings of various hospitals (<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/health/hosptl/honorroll.htm>). They do a general ranking and also rank according to specialty.

The hospitals are ranked by certain criteria such as technology, research, risky procedures, nursing care and mortality to name a few. Then, a board of 150 doctors are surveyed regarding a hospital's reputation which is also considered. The U.S. News' ranking method, which is much more complicated than I make it sound, was developed by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Perhaps it doesn't matter to you what hospital you work at as long as you are paid well and are in a location that you like. It might be interesting though to at least know a little more about the hospital before going there. If you ask enough questions during your interview, you will also get a good feel for what it is like to work there. After all, sometimes it's *almost* easy to forget that these adventures include work. If you do your research and ask questions during your interview, you will be a traveler who is not only happy with where you are, but also with where you work.