

Hospital Markets in Arkansas *at a glance*

A snapshot of hospital market structure, concentration, and ownership across the state — and how they've changed since 2000. This analysis reflects data available through May 2026.

In Arkansas, roughly six in ten hospitals now operate in monopoly or duopoly markets.

WHAT THIS ANALYSIS COVERS

This analysis focuses on the state's 69 general short-term acute care (GSAC) hospitals — the facilities where most privately insured, Medicare, and Medicaid patients receive inpatient care, and where market concentration most directly affects the prices employers and workers pay. Each hospital's market is defined via a 30-minute travel radius around that facility. Within it, we measure concentration using the Herfindahl-Hirschman Index (HHI) — a standard antitrust metric calculated as the sum of the squared market shares of the owners in a market. HHI ranges from 0 (many small hospitals, low concentration) to 10,000 (a monopoly market, which has a single owner). Our hospital-centric HHI is a consistent analytical proxy for market concentration, not a legally defined antitrust market.

☒ GSAC Hospitals (69)
 ☐ VA / Military
 ☐ Psychiatric / Behavioral
 ☐ Rehabilitation
 ☐ Children's Specialty

Market Concentration

Arkansas's hospital markets have become increasingly concentrated as the state's average hospital market HHI rose from 5,965 in 2000 to 6,802 in 2026. Every hospital operates in a market with an HHI above 1,800, the threshold the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Department of Justice (DOJ) consider “highly concentrated.” The clearest shift is at the top of the scale: the number of monopoly markets grew from 21 (27%) to 28 (41%). This reflects Arkansas's largely rural geography. Of 38 transactions, 11 qualified as “Red Zone” mergers. A Red Zone merger raises at least one merging hospital's market HHI by over 100 points to above 1,800, which DOJ and FTC guidelines presume is likely to raise prices.

2000 | 78 hospitals overall

2026 | 69 hospitals overall (1 closed in 2026)



CONCENTRATION SCALE (IN HHI)

☒ Low (<1,000 HHI)
 ☐ Moderate (1,000 to <1,800)
 ☐ High (1,800 to <5,000)
 ☐ Higher (5,000 to <10,000)
 ☐ Monopoly (10,000 HHI)

Explore the data yourself

Our tool has three components. **The Market Explorer** tracks how hospital market concentration has evolved from 2000 to May 2026, drawing on ownership data from the AHA's Annual Survey, validated against state health department filings, SEC disclosures, and public reporting. **The Closures Explorer** tracks hospital closures and openings nationwide, each year since 2000. **The Forecast Lab** uses that same data to model how a proposed merger, closure, or opening would reshape a hospital market as it stood in 2026 — it models the scenarios you specify and does not identify potential mergers.

Note on the data: The tool uses a first-of-its-kind database that we built from scratch. We have done our best to gather and validate the data; however, if you notice an error (e.g., a hospital's name, a merger year) or if you have questions about our methodology, please notify us at HealthCareAffordabilityLab@yale.edu.

Health Care
Affordability Lab
at Yale

Explore Market Concentration at
Markets.HealthCareAffordabilityLab.org



QR code to AR Hospitals

Hospital Markets in Arkansas

October 2026

Key Stats

SYSTEM OWNERSHIP

40% → 55%

31/78 → 38/69 part of system

HOSPITALS LOST (NET)

-10

17 closed, 7 opened

RED ZONE TRANSACTIONS

11 of 38

29% in Red Zone

AVG HHI INCREASE

+837

5,965 → 6,802

System Ownership Crosses the Halfway Mark

In 2000, most Arkansas hospitals were independent — 47 of 78 hospitals, with only 40% system-owned. By 2026, system-owned hospitals were the majority, accounting for 38 of 69 hospitals, or 55%. Ten systems now operate in the state, led by two Arkansas-based systems, Baptist Health and Mercy, which together own 18 hospitals.

2000 | 78 hospitals overall

31 in 11 systems 47 independents

40%

60%

2026 | 69 hospitals overall (1 closed in 2026)

38 in 10 systems 31 independents

55%

45%

Arkansas's Largest Systems

Ten systems own 38 of Arkansas's 69 hospitals; Baptist Health and Mercy lead.

SYSTEM	HOSPITALS IN STATE	AVERAGE MARKET HHI	HOSPITALS WITH CONCENTRATION ABOVE 1,800 HHI
Baptist Health	11	6,263	11 of 11
Mercy	7	7,747	7 of 7

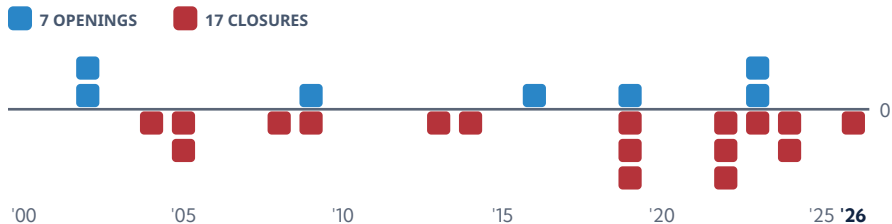
Average market HHI reflects the mean HHI across each system's hospitals within the state. HHI is calculated within a 30-minute travel radius of each facility. National hospital data typically lags by one to two years for new openings and recent ownership changes, so figures for 2024–2026 are preliminary and may not yet reflect all recent activity.

Closures and Mergers in a Rural State

Arkansas's concentration increase reflects both losses and consolidation. The state had a net loss of 10 hospitals (17 closed, 7 opened).

Of the state's 38 transactions since 2000, 11 were Red Zone mergers, most involving national and regional systems that acquired previously independent community hospitals.

Hospitals opened & closed by year



Transactions by year

