row <-which(x[ ,column\_number]==min\_val)  
then  
name<-x[row,"Hospital.Name"]  
  
 column\_number is the column corresponding to the specific outcome

This is what worked for me:  
(1) read in the file with colClasses= "character" (You could also just read in as factor by default...but then need to handle this later)  
(2) convert the column in question to numeric...based on outcome. This will generate NAs. You can use a warning suppressing function here to format the final output.  
(3) While calculation min ignore NAs

If this could be of any indication, the portion of data processing could be done in 3 lines of code:  
1- narrow down the dataframe to 1 state (df1State <- dfOutcome[dfOutcome$State == state, c("col1", "col2", "col3") ])  
2- sort the rows per Rate, Hospital name (dfSorted <- df1State[ order(), ])  
3- return the first row of the sorted data frame (dfSorted[1, "Hospital.Name"])  
  
That same code will pass all the 3 parts of best.R.