

Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

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DATE: December 19, 2008

TO: State Survey Agency Directors

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group

SUBJECT: The Five-Star Nursing Home Rating System – Questions and Answers

Memorandum Summary

- The Five-Star Nursing Home Rating System was launched on December 18, 2008.
- The star rating system will give a more user friendly way for consumers to compare nursing homes within a State.
- We are providing a comprehensive set of questions and answers concerning the Five-Star Rating System.

On December 18, 2008, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) launched the Five-Star Nursing Home Rating System as part of its continued efforts to improve the [Nursing Home Compare Web site](#). The Five-Star rating system will provide a quality of care rating for each nursing home of 1 to 5 stars. Each nursing home will have a separate star rating for performance on health survey, performance on quality measures, for the hours of care provided per resident by all staff performing nursing care tasks, and a separate staffing rating for hours of care provided by registered nurses. There will also be a composite measure to give an overall rating of quality performance that takes into account health survey inspections, quality measures, and the overall nursing staffing information from the most recent health survey inspection. The star rating system will give a more user friendly way for consumers to compare nursing homes within a State.

- A 5-star rating means that a facility ranks “much above average.”
- A 4-star rating means a facility ranks “above average.”
- A 3-star rating means a facility ranks “about average.”
- A 2-star rating means a facility ranks “below average.”
- A 1-star rating means a facility ranks “much below average.”

Consumers will notice a number of improvements; the layout of information has been edited to be more user-friendly, the ability to search and sort on more variables of interest to the consumers, and the ability to better compare nursing homes.

With the advent of the new Five-Star Rating System we are receiving many questions. To assist States, regions, providers, and consumers in answering their questions, we are providing with this memorandum a comprehensive set of questions and answers concerning the research, planning, methodology, and next steps to the Five-Star Rating System and the Nursing Home Compare Web site.

Additional information concerning the Five-Star Rating System is also available on the CMS Web site at http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CertificationandCompliance/13_FSQRS.asp#TopOfPage

/s/

Thomas E. Hamilton

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management

Attachment