

AHCA Position on Changes to CMS Five-Star Quality Rating System





Overview

In April 2019, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) made many [new changes](#) to its Five-Star Quality Rating System to help consumers evaluate skilled nursing care centers. Featured on the Nursing Home Compare website, the star ratings are based on three components—survey data, staffing information, and quality metrics—and reported by a Minimum Data Set (MDS) and claims-based system. The latest changes include updated thresholds for assigning stars (or moving the “goal posts” back) for both the staffing and quality components of the system that will abruptly cause significant changes. An estimated 44 percent of all nursing centers will lose stars in their Quality ratings, 31 percent will lose stars in their Staffing ratings, and approximately 34 percent will lose stars in their Overall ratings.

AHCA Position

- AHCA is concerned that the abrupt change in star ratings for nursing centers will be confusing to consumers, residents, and their families.
- The changes to the “goal posts” make it look like more than 30 percent of all nursing centers became worse overnight – when in fact nothing has changed in staffing levels or the quality of care provided.
 - This disruption may impact access to resident care since Managed Care Organizations and hospital discharge networks often require nursing centers to maintain their star ratings.
- Quality care is still being practiced and delivered every day in long term and post-acute care centers nationwide. Since the launch of the AHCA metric-based [Quality Initiative](#) in 2012, nursing centers have made significant improvements in quality of care, including fewer individuals receiving antipsychotic medications and staff spending more individual time with residents than ever before in a profession where workforce remains a challenge.
- AHCA supports public reporting and transparency of nursing center data. As changes are made in the future, we look forward to continuing to work with CMS to ensure that additional Five-Star changes are less confusing.
 - We supported legislation to publicly report more quality measures for nursing centers and link to payment.
 - We support the latest overall Five-Star changes, including lifting the survey freeze to reflect new data, gradually increasing the scoring on the quality measures every six months, and separating out long-stay and short-stay quality measures.
 - We continue to support adding customer satisfaction and turnover and retention measures to Five-Star to improve the system.

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