



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

April 30, 2020

ALISA: NH #2020-028

**QSO-20-28-NH NURSING HOME FIVE STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM UPDATES,
NURSING HOME STAFF COUNTS, AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has released resources, guidelines, and tools over the past few months to help facilities prevent and control the transmission of COVID-19. With [QSO-20-28-NH](#), CMS clarifies information about previously released information related to COVID-19. The memo also provides new information about the Nursing Home Compare & Five Star Quality Rating System and staffing information.

Nursing Home Compare website & Nursing Home Five Star Quality Rating System:

To ensure the rating system reflects fair information for consumers, CMS will not update the health inspection domain of the Five Star Quality Rating System. In March 2020, CMS suspended recertification surveys and conducted targeted inspections focused on urgent safety threats and infection control. The changes in survey activity will disrupt the health inspection domain of the Five Star system and could under-weight or over-weight results.

- CMS will not use any inspections conducted after March 4, 2020 to calculate the rating of the health inspection domain.
- CMS will post the results of surveys conducted after March 4, 2020 on the Nursing Home Compare website.

CMS has waived timeframe requirements for submitting resident assessment data and Payroll Based Journal (PBJ) data. The waivers for these areas will not affect the April 29, 2020 update to the quality measures and staffing domains of the rating system, because the data used for that update is based on time periods that occurred before the COVID-19 emergency. CMS is monitoring the impact the waivers will have on future rating system updates and will make adjustments as needed to ensure accurate and fair ratings.

Nursing Home Staff:

CMS is publishing a list of the average number of nursing and total staff that work onsite in each nursing home, each day, as well as resident census and licensed bed numbers. This information is gleaned from fourth quarter (calendar year) 2019 PBJ data. Local, state, and federal agencies can use the information to help direct resources, such as personal protective equipment and testing supplies.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

CMS received many questions related to the resources and guidance released to assist facilities during the COVID-19 emergency. To answer these questions and to provide clarity for facilities, CMS released a list of FAQs as an attachment to the QSO memo. The topics include:

- Individuals entering and leaving nursing homes, such as visitation, the use of civil money penalty (CMP) funds for communicative devices, health care workers, and residents leaving for appointments;

Dear NH Administrator: QSO 20-28-NH

April 30, 2020

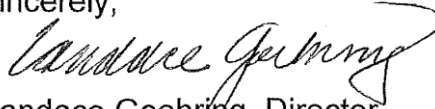
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- Surveys and the Infection Control Self-Assessment;
- Waivers of Federal Requirements; and
- Resident cohorting, separation, and admission, including admitting residents discharged from hospitals.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety.

For questions related to the Nursing Home Compare website & Five Star Quality Rating System, please email bettercare@cms.hhs.gov. For questions related to the FAQ, please email DNH_TriageTeam@cms.hhs.gov. For any other questions, please contact Lisa Herke, Nursing Home Policy Program Manager at (509) 209-3088 or lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"