



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

July 17, 2020

AL TSA: NH #2020-046  
**QSO-20-34-NH CHANGES TO INFORMATION POSTED ON THE  
NURSING HOME COMPARE WEBSITE AND FIVE STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM  
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

During the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE), the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued many temporary regulatory waivers and new rules to assist nursing homes in managing during the PHE. Many of these waivers and rules affect the information posted on the Nursing Home Compare website and used in the Five Star Quality Rating System.

On June 25, 2020, CMS issued [QSO-20-34-NH](#), a memorandum to notify nursing home stakeholders about changes to the information provided on the Nursing Home Compare website and the information used in the Five Star Quality Rating System. Additionally, CMS announced the end of one of the blanket waivers.

**Payroll-Based Journal (PBJ) Blanket Waiver**

Under the COVID-19 Emergency Declaration Blanket Waivers for Health Care Providers, CMS waived the requirements at 42 CFR 483.70(q), which require nursing home providers to submit staffing data through the PBJ system. Effective immediately, CMS is ending the blanket emergency waiver of 42 CFR 483.70(q), and all nursing homes are required to resume submission of staffing data through the PBJ system as required by the regulation. **Specifically, facilities must submit the requisite staffing data for Calendar Quarter 2 (April – June) 2020 through the PBJ system by August 14, 2020.** In addition, while not required, CMS encourages nursing homes to submit data for Calendar Quarter 1 (January – March) 2020.

**Nursing Home Compare and Five Star Rating Information**

- Health Inspection Domain Star Rating:
  - On March 4, 2020, CMS re-prioritized how nursing homes are inspected, and on March 23, 2020, suspended certain inspections. Because of the changes to the inspections, the health inspection domain continues to be held constant, and the rating is based on surveys conducted prior to March 4, 2020.
- Staffing Measures and Ratings:
  - Because of the PBJ rule blanket waiver, CMS will not be able to update the PBJ staffing measures and the staffing domain star rating at the next update (July 2020), and the staffing measures and star ratings will be held constant at that update.
  - In addition, CMS recognized that the waiver of the requirement prevented some facilities from improving their rating from their previous quarter's submission. Specifically, facilities whose staffing rating was automatically downgraded to one-star due to missing the deadline for the previous submission, or for reporting four or more days in the quarter with no registered nurse, now will not have the opportunity to correct and improve their staffing rating since the ratings will be held constant. Therefore, CMS will remove the one-star staffing rating downgrade, and instead, these facilities will have their measures and ratings temporarily suppressed.

Dear NH Administrator – QSO 20-34-NH

July 17, 2020

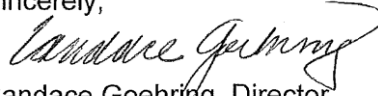
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- Because CMS ended the PBJ blanket waiver, the October 2020 update of staffing measures and ratings will reflect data submitted for Calendar Quarter 2.
- Quality Measures: During the COVID-19 PHE, CMS waived requirements at 42 CFR 483.20 related to the timelines for completing and submitting resident assessment data, which could affect some quality measures.
  - Beginning July 29, 2020, quality measures based on the data collection period ending December 31, 2019 will be held constant. Quality measures that are based on a data collection period prior to December 31, 2019 (e.g., ending September 30, 2019), however, will continue to be updated until the underlying data reaches December 31, 2019.

For questions to CMS about these changes, please email: [BetterCare@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:BetterCare@cms.hhs.gov)

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any other questions, please contact Lisa Herke, Nursing Home Policy Program Manager at (509) 209-3088 or [lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services

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