



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

January 19, 2021

AL TSA: NH #2021-003
**QSO 21-06-NH UPDATES TO THE NURSING HOME COMPARE WEBSITE
AND FIVE STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provide the Nursing Home Compare website and Five Star Quality Rating System as resources to help consumers evaluate nursing home care. The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) caused CMS to take a number of actions to help protect nursing home residents, including temporary regulatory waivers and new rules. CMS also suspended, in part, inspections and investigations. The new rules, waivers, and suspended inspections affected the information posted on the Nursing Home Compare website and used in the Five Star Quality Rating System. As a result, CMS held quality measures constant. CMS also held the Health Inspection Rating domain constant, which affected the Special Focus Facility and the Abuse Icon programs.

Separate from the changes to the Five Star Quality Rating System, CMS is transitioning to a redesigned website called Care Compare to replace the Nursing Home Compare website.

On December 4, 2020, CMS issued [QSO-21-06-NH](#) to provide updates on the Health Inspection and Quality Measure domains of the Five Star Quality Rating System, and the transition to the new Care Compare website

Five Star Quality Rating System Updates

- *Health Inspection Ratings.* CMS has instructed State Survey Agencies (SA) to resume inspections as soon as they have the resources. All states have conducted focused infection control surveys. CMS will resume calculating nursing homes' health inspection ratings on January 27, 2021. Findings from the focused infection control inspections will be used to calculate each nursing home's inspection rating. These findings will be included the same way findings from complaint inspections are used in the Five Star Quality Rating System.
- *Quality Measures.* The quality measures portion of the Five Star Quality Rating System will be updated on January 27, 2021. CMS will use data based on the data collection period ending June 30, 2020.
 - The updates do not apply to quality measures that are part of the Skilled Nursing Facility Quality Reporting Program (SNF QRP).
 - The Five Star Quality Rating System updates will automatically result in updates to the Special Focus Facility (SFF) program, including updates to SFF candidates, and facilities' status for receiving an icon for noncompliance related to abuse.
 - More details were posted on January 15, 2021 in the [Five Star Technical Users' Guide](#).

Questions about Five Star Quality Rating System should be directed to BetterCare@cms.hhs.gov.

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Transition to the new Care Compare website

On September 3, 2020, CMS announced the launch of Care Compare, a streamlined re-design of the Nursing Home Compare site (<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>). Beginning December 1, 2020, users are redirected to the new site. The Nursing Home Compare website, and the data.medicare.gov website (which houses the underlying data for the Nursing Home Compare website) are no longer available. There is no change in the information available about nursing homes or the methodology used to calculate ratings.

If you have any 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

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