

FIVE STAR RATING SYSTEM For SKILLED NURSING HOMES

Consumers now have another tool at their disposal when selecting a nursing home and to monitor the home's performance. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services new Five-Star Rating System was recently launched at www.medicare.gov. This system rates nursing homes on a scale considering regulatory compliance, staffing data, and selected measures of quality. The ratings system then combines the three categories for an overall rating which results in this "Five-Star Rating System."

This new Five-Star Rating System should be used in conjunction with other available information. A visit to the nursing home is essential. Consumers can then weigh their experience and observations against the data of the Five-Star rating and compare the rating with their own personal visit to the home. For example, staffing data that is used for the rating system is based on the two weeks prior to the nursing home's annual regulatory survey, an insufficient period of time to represent the usual staffing pattern of the home. Consumers can ask themselves, do residents look well groomed and clean, are call lights answered in a timely manner, do staff address one another and the residents with respect?

The CT Long Term Care Ombudsman Program supports giving consumers information about nursing home performance. State and Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are advocates for quality of life, quality of care, and respect for individual rights of residents. In addition to working toward resolution of complaints, Ombudsmen can provide consumers with information about regulatory survey results, and provide guidance on how to assure good care. You can contact the Connecticut Long Term Care Ombudsman Program by calling 211 or in CT, 866-388-1888.

Helpful Links to Learn More About the CMS Five-Star Rating System for Nursing Homes

CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) Information

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CertificationandCompliance/Downloads/consumerfactsheet.pdf> - consumer information on the Five-Star Rating System

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CertificationandCompliance/13_FSQRS.asp - description of the federal government's Five-Star Quality Rating System

www.medicare.gov - direct link to "nursing home compare" link to access the Five-Star Quality Rating information

<http://www.aahsa.org/article.aspx?id=7002> - access to yearly/monthly summary information on CMS Five Star Rating – accessed from the American Association of Homes for the Aging website (non-profit nursing home trade group)

NCCNHR – The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care Information

http://www.nccnhr.org/public/460_2459_19463.cfm

http://www.nccnhr.org/uploads/File/Five-Star_Rating_System12-17-08.pdf

NASOP – National Association of State Ombudsman Program Information

http://www.nccnhr.org/uploads/File/Ombudsman_statement_on_Five-Star_Release.pdf

Nursing Home Industry Comments About the Five-Star Rating System – American Health Care Association

http://www.ahcancal.org/advocacy/issue_briefs/Issue%20Briefs/CMS%20Five%20Star%20Quality%20Rating%20System.pdf - comments of the American Health Care Association (for-profit nursing home trade group)

Center for Medicare Advocacy Comments on Five Star

http://www.medicareadvocacy.org/SNF_08_12.18.5StarRating.htm

Nancy B. Shaffer
Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06016
Nancy.shaffer@ct.gov