



Health Care Council of Illinois

Regulatory Update: News and Views

January 5, 2009

How Do I Change My Stars?

Last week, the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** rushed the release of its five-star rating system. The calculation of stars is based on three factors, each also receiving a star rating: violations from the past three years, staffing levels reported on the CMS-671 during the facility annual survey, and a compilation of the facility Quality Measures. Last week your associations also provided each facility with talking points about the star system if there were any inquiries by the media or families.

In the CMS release of data to the public, a good number of facilities had **data missing in one of the three areas, or did not have the data reported accurately**. Because of the calculation methodology, an Immediate Jeopardy will practically result in the loss of a star in the compliance area. For some facilities, if a level of violation was reduced through Informal Dispute Resolution or administrative hearing, **that reduction was not always reflected in the reported data influencing the number of stars**.

An explanation of how **data was collected in each of the three areas and how each of the stars was calculated** can be found in the Star ***Technical Users' Guide*** at the CMS Web site (<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CertificationandCompliance/Downloads/usersguide.pdf>). If you believe that your stars were calculated inaccurately, or data was missing in one of the three areas, you may call the **CMS star hot line at 800-839-9290**.