

Health Care Council of Illinois Response to CMS' Five-star Rating System

Talking points:

- This five-star rating system only measures public health violations. What it doesn't measure are the programs and services that go above and beyond basic care. Just as five-star hotels provide an extra level of amenities and services to guests, nursing homes also offer services beyond basic care. These should be reflected in the rating system.
- We believe that a rating system for nursing homes is an excellent tool for consumers. If it were constructed properly, such a system could help guide prospective residents in selecting a home. But, this rating system only focuses on what homes are doing wrong. We think there is a better way.
- A good nursing home should be defined by the presence of quality programs, which aren't accounted for in the current rating system. Not just by the absence of violations.
- There are some great, innovative things that facilities are doing that aren't reflected in these ratings. For example, how well we heal pressure ulcers. Whether the home provides pressure ulcer prevention services. How well facilities work to reduce pain and what rehabilitation programs and services they offer for residents. How facilities are measuring and enhancing customer satisfaction.
- The turnover level in staffing is another crucial measuring point. But it is overlooked by CMS. It's more important to have a stable, well-trained and caring staff who know the residents rather than additional staff members who may not offer the same level of care.
- Our nursing homes accept patients at all stages, including those that are extremely ill and have limited movement. The rating system should not penalize these homes because they care for more residents requiring special care.

- The long term care profession in Illinois recently launched its own state-wide quality initiative. Today, more than 400 facilities throughout the state are participating in the Road to Excellence. This encourages homes to:
 - Focus on reducing pressure ulcers and managing residents' pain,
 - Formally assess resident and family satisfaction, and
 - Report results quarterly.

This initiative symbolizes the profession's dedication to maximizing resident health, outlook and quality of life.