

Talking points for below-average star-rated facilities:

These are some statements that can help you if you receive questions from the media, family members or residents. Some of the statements address specific areas, so make sure the situation and description applies to your facility. If you have a special quality improvement program that's worth highlighting, now is the time to mention it. Emphasize your facility's innovative programs to enhance resident quality of life. Point out that the current star-rating system does not recognize these types of quality initiatives; it only measures basic compliance.

We believe the rating system measures some things, but leaves out others. It misses some important quality attributes. For example:

- We have a new pain management program. We're now detecting and treating pain better.
- We have a new method to improve how we detect and treat pressure ulcers.
- We have a program for measuring and enhancing customer satisfaction

We started the new programs because we're part of the Road to Excellence. We're one of about 400 facilities across the state improving our care every day. The rating system should be improved. We should be given credit for our positive programs.

High Number of Public Health Violations

For larger-bed facilities: We have a higher number of public health violations because we serve a higher number of residents than the average Illinois nursing home. Our average number of violations per resident is actually lower than the state and national average.

Low Staffing Levels

We understand that our score was affected by the staffing levels. We want to point out that staff turnover is the greatest indicator of patient satisfaction. Our turnover level is below average and our staffing levels are appropriate for our facility. Our residents are pleased to be served by such a dedicated and experienced staff.

For larger-bed facilities: Our per resident staffing levels may appear to be low, but we have more professionals working here – higher than the state or national average. Like hospitals, being a larger facility enables us to offer higher professional service at greater efficiency.

Unflattering Quality Measures

The ranking shows that our pain management numbers are above average, but there is more to the story. We're part of the statewide Road to Excellence initiative. It emphasizes the importance of pain treatment and recognition. We have new techniques to ask about

and detect pain in our residents. So more people are reporting pain. And more people are being treated for pain, which improves our residents' quality of life.

The ranking shows that our pressure ulcer management numbers are above average, but there is more to the story. We're part of the Road to Excellence initiative. It emphasizes improved ways to detect and treat pressure ulcers, so more pressure ulcers are detected. And treatment is starting earlier, which helps our residents.

We accept patients at all stages, even those who are extremely ill and have limited movement. But the rating system penalizes facilities like ours that have more patients who require special care. We provide the best care possible for our residents. We know they and their loved ones appreciate it.