

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

CMS Identifies 3 Ways for Facilities to Boost Star Scores

The agency expects providers will improve over time.

CMS' suggestions for how facilities can garner more stars in its public rating system targets the three components of the scoring calculation. In a Q&A document on the program, the agency suggests facilities that want to improve should do three things:

Implement changes in care processes resulting in fewer and less serious deficiencies;

Increase the level of RNs, LPNs, and CNAs;

Concentrate on quality improvement actions in the areas reflected in the quality measures. (Review the 10 QMs used in the star-rating calculation on the next page.)

As for facilities worried about what the stars might hold for them moving forward, the agency expects "the distribution to shift towards a higher number of stars over time, as facilities take quality improvement actions to improve their star ratings."

How the stars panned out: In CMS' December posting, about 23 percent of the nursing homes were rated at one-star for overall quality, 21 percent at two-star, 21 percent at three-star, and about 23 percent at four-star. Twelve percent of facilities netted five stars.