



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

October 18, 2019

AL TSA: NH #2019-025  
**QSO-20-01-NH CONSUMER ALERTS ADDED TO THE NURSING HOME COMPARE WEBSITE  
AND THE FIVE STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home Administrator:

This letter is to inform you of upcoming changes to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) *Nursing Home Compare* website and the *Five Star Quality Rating System*. CMS announced these changes in a memorandum, [QSO-20-01-NH](#).

Since 2008, CMS has periodically made improvements to the *Five Star Quality Rating System* and the *CMS Nursing Home Compare* website. Each update is part of an ongoing effort to improve information available to consumers and drive quality improvement amongst nursing homes.

CMS is very concerned about incidents of abuse (including neglect and exploitation) in nursing homes, and is committed to preventing abuse. As part of the strategy, CMS wants to make it easier for consumers to identify facilities with instances of non-compliance related to abuse. To do this, in October 2019, they are adding an icon to the *Nursing Home Compare* website to highlight facilities that meet the following criteria:

- Facilities cited for abuse where residents were found to be harmed (Scope/Severity of G or higher) on the most recent standard survey, or on a complaint survey within the past 12 months; or
- Facilities cited for abuse where residents were found to be potentially harmed (Scope/Severity of D or higher) on the most recent standard survey or a complaint survey within the past 12 months, and on the previous (i.e., second most recent) standard survey or on a complaint survey in the prior 12 months (i.e., from 24 months ago to 12 months ago).

Icon:



In addition, on October 23, 2019, CMS will update a consumer checklist with questions consumers can use to ask facilities for information about how they prevent abuse. Access the checklist at: <https://www.medicare.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/nursing-home-checklist.pdf>

The QSO memo also notes there will be a disclaimer on the *Nursing Home Compare* website related to incomplete abuse information for facilities located in Oregon. Because Adult Protective Services investigated abuse allegations in Oregon, not the Oregon state agency, findings of abuse may not be reflected on the *Nursing Home Compare* website.

For more information on CMS' strategy to ensure safety and quality in nursing homes, go to <https://www.cms.gov/blog/ensuring-safety-and-quality-americas-nursing-homes>.

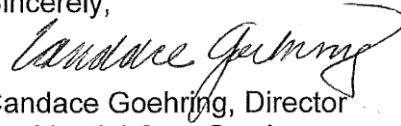
For more information about the changes described in the QSO memo, please see the "Five Star Users' Guide October 2019" at <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/CertificationandCompliance/FSQRS.html>

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The effective date of the QSO memorandum is October 23, 2019. For questions about the QSO memorandum, please email: [BetterCare@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:BetterCare@cms.hhs.gov)

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. For questions directed to Residential Care Services, please contact Lisa Herke, Nursing Home Policy Program Manager at (509) 225-2819 or [lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:lisa.herke@dshs.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"