

# FACT SHEET: Quality of Patient Care Star Rating

## Overview

Beginning in July 2015, the Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings were introduced on the [Home Health Compare](#) website as a tool to assist people (e.g., family members, caregivers, payers, health care systems and care organizations) in evaluating home health agencies. The Star Rating summarizes the performance of a home health agency's patient care by displaying information from several different measures in one simple format.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**WHERE CAN I FIND THIS RATING?** Each agency's rating is displayed on [Home Health Compare](#) under the "Quality of Patient Care" tab as *a single star rating with a possible rating of 1-5 stars*.

**HOW DO THE STAR RATINGS WORK?** The Quality of Patient Care Star Rating is a summary measure of a home health agency's performance based on how well it provides patient care in nine areas. Across the country, most home health agencies fall "in the middle" with 3 stars—delivering good quality of care. A Quality of Patient Care Star Rating higher than 3 means that an agency performed better than average on the measured care practices and outcomes compared to other agencies. A Quality of Patient Care Star Rating below 3 means that an agency's performance was below average compared to other agencies nationally. The Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings are different from the consumer ratings that are seen on websites or apps for products like books, restaurants, or hotels that reflect averages of consumer *opinions*.

**SO, THAT MEANS A 3-STAR RATING IS GOOD?** Yes, a 3-Star Rating means the agency provides good quality of care. A rating of 1 or 2 stars means that the agency's performance was below the average of other agencies on selected measures; it doesn't necessarily mean care is poor. A rating of 4 or 5 stars means that the agency's performance was above the average of other agencies on selected measures.

**SHOULD I USE THE STAR RATING AS THE ONLY WAY TO DETERMINE AN AGENCY'S LEVEL OF CARE QUALITY?** No. The Quality of Patient Care Star Rating is offered as a first step in determining how one agency compares to other agencies. Other factors to consider in evaluating a home health agency may include the health care needs and preferences of the patient, additional quality measures on Home Health Compare, references on agency performance, and possible past experiences with an agency.

**WHAT DATA ARE USED TO COMPUTE THE RATING?** The Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings are computed using eight measurements of quality that are reported on the Home Health Compare website. They are:

**Process of care measures – how often the agency:**

1. Initiated patient care in a timely manner

**Outcome of care measures – how often the patient:**

2. Got better at walking or moving around
3. Got better at getting in and out of bed
4. Got better at bathing themselves
5. Was able to engage in activity with less pain
6. Experienced less shortness of breath
7. Got better at taking their drugs correctly by mouth
8. Required acute care hospitalization

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Seven (#1-#7) are OASIS-based measures and one (#8) is a Medicare fee-for-service claims-based measure. More information about the data sources is located on [Home Health Compare](#).

**WHY AREN'T THERE 4- OR 5-STAR AGENCIES IN MY COMMUNITY?** Not every service area, community, or even state has a 4- or 5-Star home health agency. Agencies are compared based on the measured care practices and outcomes of other agencies. So, your community may not currently have any home health agencies that are performing better on average than certain agencies in communities elsewhere in the U.S. The ratings are also updated on a quarterly basis, so it is possible that while you may not have a 4- or 5-Star Rating agency in your community now, you may have one in the future.

**WHEN ARE THE RATINGS UPDATED?** The Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings are updated quarterly on Home Health Compare in January, April, July, and October.

**WILL THE STAR RATINGS PROGRAM EVER BE ADJUSTED TO REFLECT NEW OR OTHER MEASUREMENTS?** It is possible. CMS regularly monitors the Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings, conducts data analysis on component measures, and solicits suggestions from experts to determine possible refinements to the Quality of Patient Care Star Rating program.

**WHY IS THERE MORE THAN ONE STAR RATING ON HOME HEALTH COMPARE?** In January 2016, the Patient Survey Star Rating (also known as the Home Health CAHPS Star Rating (HHCAHPS)) was added to Home Health Compare. The HHCAHPS uses feedback from surveys of home health patients and caregivers. The Quality of Patient Care Star Ratings can be used together with the HHCAHPS Star Ratings to provide a more comprehensive view of the quality of care provided by a home health agency.

**WHY DID CMS INCORPORATE THE STAR RATING?** The Affordable Care Act calls for transparent, easily understood summary information on provider quality to be publicly reported and made widely available. The Quality of Patient Care Star Rating is part of CMS' plan to adopt star ratings across all [Medicare.gov](#) Compare websites.

### References

Home Health Star Ratings

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Quality-Initiatives-Patient-Assessment-Instruments/HomeHealthQualityInits/HHQIHomeHealthStarRatings.html>

Home Health Compare

<https://www.medicare.gov/homehealthcompare>