



Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

Ref: S&C-09-17

**DATE:** December 5, 2008

**TO:** State Survey Agency Directors

**FROM:** Director  
Survey and Certification Group

**SUBJECT:** **Nursing Homes** – Launching of Five Star Rating System on the Nursing Home Compare Website

**Memorandum Summary**

- The purpose of this memorandum is to give the State Survey Agencies (SAs) advance notice of the Five Star Quality Rating System being added to the Nursing Home Compare Web site.
- States will receive a preview of their provider's Five-star rating on December 15, 2008.
- Providers will have access to their individual Five-Star rating beginning December 16, 2008.

On December 18, 2008 the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will unveil the "Five Star Quality Rating System" on Nursing Home Compare. Nursing homes will receive an Overall Rating that is based on facility performance on three types of performance measures: Health Inspections, Staffing, and Quality Measures. Nursing Home Compare will also display the star ratings for each of the three performance measures alongside the Overall Rating. Nursing homes with five stars are considered to have much above average quality and nursing homes with one star are considered to have quality much below average.

Beginning the morning of December 16, 2008 nursing home providers will receive a preview of their individual rating via their electronic connection to their State servers for submission of Minimum Data Set (MDS) data. In order for providers to retrieve their preview, they must log into their State server. We request that States inform providers that they should check their mailboxes beginning December 16, 2008. We also request that you communicate this information to your State colleagues, such as the State Medicaid Agency.

On December 18, 2008 the new layout of *Nursing Home Compare* will be launched and star quality ratings for each nursing home will be displayed. We expect that the CMS Administrator will host a national press conference call. We will forward to SAs the CMS press release when it becomes available.

**Effective Date:** Immediately.

**Training:** The information in this announcement should be shared with all survey and certification staff, their managers, and all long-term care providers.

/s/

Thomas E. Hamilton

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management