



Home Health Star Ratings **CMS Issues Proposed Methodology**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services ([CMS](#)) will soon begin publishing [star ratings](#) on its website for home health agencies. Similar to websites such as Yelp and Amazon, CMS expects that star ratings will make it easier for consumers to understand how agencies perform on various quality measures. The specific methodology for calculating and reporting the star rating is still under development. CMS plans to publish the first star rating in July 2015 and will be updating the star ratings quarterly.

In December 2014, CMS issued a proposed methodology for the computation of star ratings, which includes 10 of the 27 currently reported process and outcome quality measures. This methodology was revised last month and includes:

1. Timely Initiation of Care
2. Drug Education on all Medications Provided to Patient/Caregiver
3. Influenza Immunization Received for Current Flu Season
4. Pneumococcal Vaccine Ever Received
5. Improvement in Ambulation
6. Improvement in Bed Transferring
7. Improvement in Bathing
8. Improvement in Pain Interfering With Activity
9. Improvement in Shortness of Breath
10. Acute Care Hospitalization

CMS chose the above measures based on several factors, including that they were deemed to have high face validity and clinical relevance, have sufficient data to report for most agencies, and do not typically show much random variation over time. Patient experience of care measures will likely be added to future ratings calculations.

To receive a star rating, agencies must have been certified for at least 6 months and must have 20 or more complete quality episodes on a measure within the 12-month reporting period for at least 6 of the 10 measures that will be used to determine the ratings. According to CMS' [frequently asked questions](#), a rating of 3 stars will mean that

an agency is performing at a level similar to most other providers, while a higher rating will mean that an agency is performing well above average.

The star rating is meant to be an additional tool to help consumers' health care decision-making. None of the current information on the CMS website will be removed.

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