



National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Long-Term Care Ombudsmen Comment on Nursing Home Ratings

COLUMBUS, OHIO - The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP) commends the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for providing a new tool for long-term care consumers while urging consumers to not oversimplify nursing home selection. The new Five-Star Rating System launched at www.medicare.gov rates nursing homes on a scale considering regulatory compliance, staffing data, and selected measures of quality.

"We are very supportive of giving consumers information to select a nursing home and to monitor the home's performance," said Beverley Laubert, the association's president, "and we urge consumers and their families to seek an understanding of how the ratings are derived and to use the ratings in conjunction with other resources."

In reviewing the Five-Star rating for a particular nursing home, consumers should compare the rating with their own experience during a personal visit to the home. For example, staffing data that is used for the rating system is based on the two weeks prior to the nursing home's annual regulatory survey, an insufficient period of time to represent the usual staffing pattern of the home. Consumers should visit the home and review staffing data that is required to be posted for every shift, every day. Consumers should weigh this data against their own observations. For example, do residents look clean and well groomed, are call lights answered in a timely manner, do staff address one another and residents with respect? These observations will give families a picture of what life is like in the home.

State and local long-term care ombudsmen are advocates for quality of life, quality of care, and respect for individual rights of residents. In addition to working toward resolution of complaints, long-term care ombudsmen can provide consumers with information about homes in their area, explain regulatory survey results, and provide guidance on how to assure good care. Consumers can find their State Ombudsman phone number at www.medicare.gov when reviewing data for homes in their state or at www.nasop.org.

ABOUT NASOP: The National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs is a nonprofit organization that was formed in 1985. NASOP is composed of state long-term care ombudsmen representing their state programs created by the Older Americans Act.

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