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CHANGES TO CMS FIVE-STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM ARE CONFUSING, SAYS LOUISIANA NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION

Despite Statewide Quality Improvements, 35 Percent of Skilled Nursing Facilities in Louisiana Will Receive Lower Star Ratings

(Baton Rouge – February 20, 2015) Reacting to Friday’s announcement by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding changes to the Five-Star Quality Rating System used to evaluate skilled nursing facilities, Joseph Donchess, executive director of Louisiana Nursing Home Association called the new grading structure confusing for consumers.

“Changes to the CMS Five-Star Quality Rating System will result in an estimated 35 percent of all skilled nursing facilities in our state losing one or two stars in their ratings — making it appear as though they got worse overnight,” said Donchess. “Nothing has changed in the quality of care these facilities provide.”

Donchess explained that consumers use the Five-Star Quality Ratings and other information provided by CMS on the Nursing Home Compare website as a resource to help them make decisions about skilled nursing facilities and where to place a loved one.

Donchess noted that quality among skilled nursing facilities has been steadily improving. “As a group, long term and post-acute care providers in Louisiana have improved on nearly every clinical outcome and quality measure calculated and reported by CMS. But the new rating system does not reflect these improvements,” he said. “Rebasing the Five-Star system sends the wrong message that quality in our skilled nursing facilities is on the decline when just the opposite is the case.”

“Consumers should not rely on CMS Five-Star ratings as the only resource for making decisions about skilled nursing care,” said Donchess. “An in-person visit to facilities being considered— including discussion with staff and other family members – is always the best approach.”

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ABOUT THE CMS FIVE-STAR QUALITY RATING SYSTEM

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) created the Five-Star Quality Rating System in 2008 to help consumers, their families, and caregivers compare skilled nursing facilities more easily and to help identify areas about which they may want to ask questions.

The quality rating system gives each skilled nursing facility a rating of between one and five stars. Facilities with five stars are considered to have much above average quality, and facilities with one star are considered to have quality below average. There is one Overall Five-Star rating for each skilled nursing facility, and a separate rating for each of the following three sources of information: Health Inspections, Staffing, and Quality Measures.

ABOUT LNHA

Louisiana Nursing Home Association is a non-profit federation representing more than 250 non-profit and for-profit nursing facilities and assisted living communities that care for approximately 30,000 elderly and disabled individuals each day. For more information on LNHA, visit our website at www.lnha.org.