



**Florida  
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## **CMS' Five Star Nursing Home Rating System Called Into Question Once Again**

*Attorney General Bill McCollum Joins 30 AGs in Calling System 'Misleading' and Urging Its Suspension*

**Tallahassee, FL** – The Florida Health Care Association (FHCA) today applauded Attorney General Bill McCollum for joining 30 other state Attorneys General in sending a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, calling for the suspension and revision of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS') Nursing Home Five Star Rating System.

According to the letter, the rating system, which was launched at the end of the last Administration, “...can be misleading and create significant confusion for seniors.”

“Florida’s long term care community is grateful for the dedication of Attorney General McCollum to provide consumers an accurate representation of the care our profession provides every day for thousands of frail elders and individuals with disabilities in our state,” stated Emmett Reed, Executive Director of FHCA. “We praise the leadership of Martha Coakley (D), Attorney General of Massachusetts, and William Mims (R), Attorney General of Virginia for championing of the use of fair and precise data in assessing quality in nursing homes for consumer use and for requesting a temporary suspension and revision to the existing Five-Star ratings system.”

In part, the letter to Secretary Sebelius also states:

*In the interest of consumers as well as providers, we believe it imperative that the current Five Star System be suspended temporarily and revised using a more appropriate criterion-reference evaluation methodology. Fortunately, CMS' Nursing Home Compare System that was in place before Five Star remains available to consumers as a tool for nursing home selection during what should be a short revision process.*

With a desire to bring about a better system, Reed stated, “In order to revise the system to create one that provides clearly articulated information that is timely, reflects quality outcomes and, by design, is more helpful to consumers, FHCA looks forward to working with the American Health Care Association, Secretary Sebelius, CMS and other concerned advocates including state Attorneys General.”

“The fact that these thirty-one state leaders, who are dedicated to protecting consumers, came together to highlight weaknesses of the current Five Star system speaks volumes about the weaknesses in a system that was developed to aid consumers,” said Bruce Yarwood, President and CEO of the American Health Care Association, FHCA’s national affiliate. “We join these Attorneys General in urging Secretary Sebelius to re-evaluate CMS’ scoring and ratings criteria to ensure that appropriate information that truly reflects the quality of nursing home care is available for all consumers.”

### **ABOUT THE FLORIDA HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION**

The Florida Health Care Association (FHCA) is a federation which serves nearly 1,000 members and represents over 500 long term care facilities that provide skilled nursing care, short-term rehab, assisted living and other services to the frail elderly and individuals with disabilities in Florida. FHCA was founded on the premise that its members have a moral obligation to the residents they serve, and since 1954 the Association has worked diligently to improve quality of care and quality of life for the state’s growing elder care population. For more information about the Florida Health Care Association, visit [www.fhca.org](http://www.fhca.org).

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*Representing the Florida Long Term Care Community*

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