

Long Term Care Center Quality in Florida and the United States: Trends and Current Status

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Overview & Methodology

The Florida Health Care Association conducted a comprehensive review of quality indicators for Florida long term care centers and how they compare with those in other states, related to current status and changes in quality and rankings over time.

Data for this study relied mostly on data from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Nursing Home Compare¹ resource covering the years 2014 through 2018. Data was also retrieved from the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) website.² States were then ranked on each indicator, with the most desirable value ranked as 1 and the least desirable ranked as 51.

Key Findings

Florida long term care centers are consistently among the strongest performers in the nation, not only in terms of the most current quality data but also in terms of improvements made over the past several years.

From 2014 to 2018, Florida's overall rank among states improved by an average of 3.8 positions on the 35 indicators for which trend data is available. This includes a 20-position improvement in the portion of long-stay residents who are physically restrained, a 17-position improvement in the portion who receive antipsychotic medication, and a 15-position jump in certified nursing assistant staffing hours per resident day.

In terms of national ratings and award, Florida's overall rank improved from 16th in 2014 to 7th in 2018. Further, Florida's rank in proportion of highly-rated centers improved from 20th in 2014 to 8th in 2018, while the portion of low-rated centers fell, elevating Florida's rank from 22nd to 7th.

These recognitions in part reflect Florida's strong resident protections and high quality standards. Indeed, Florida has the nation's highest level of mandated staffing hours per resident day, and the 7th highest level of required CNA training.

¹ <https://data.medicare.gov/data/nursing-home-compare>

² https://www.ahcancal.org/quality_improvement/quality_award/Pages/QualityAwardRecipients.aspx
https://www.ahcancal.org/quality_improvement/quality_award/Pages/Gold-Recipients.aspx

Staffing

Staffing levels in long term care centers are one key indicator of the attention paid to residents or the resources available to them. Long term care centers employ various categories of clinical staff – including registered nurses (RN), licensed practical nurses (LPN), certified nursing assistants (CNA) and others – representing a range of training and experience levels. The distribution of staff types may be as important as their overall volume, in terms of establishing resident satisfaction and access to care.

Medicare does not set minimum resident-to-staff ratios, but does require that certain types of professionals be on site for specific periods of time. For example, at least one licensed practical nurse must be present at all times, while a registered nurse must be present at least eight hours per day. Staffing levels in long term care centers vary dramatically within states, and fluctuate within centers based on the time of day or whether it is a weekday or a weekend. Provisions of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) changed requirements for how staffing hours are reported and verified, so it is therefore important to view the following data with this in mind, both in terms of state averages and trends over time.

Florida has among the nation’s most resident-friendly staffing-related long term care center regulations, with the:

- Highest level (1st) of mandated staffing hours (3.6 hours compared with median of 2.5 hours nationally)
- 7th highest level of required CNA training (120 hours compared with 90 hours nationally)

Perhaps as a reflection of these standards, Florida’s overall nurse staffing rates rank:

- 9th among all states, up from 11th in 2014
- 1st among the nation’s 10 most populous states

STAFFING LEVELS, MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS, AND TRAINING FACTORS	Florida Rank 2018	Florida Rank 2014	Rank Change 2014-2018	Florida Value 2018	National Median Value 2018
Total nurse staffing	9	11	+ 2	4.31	4.03
CNA staffing	8	9	+ 1	2.69	2.42
Minimum staffing hours set by state ³	1	n/a	n/a	3.6	2.5
Minimum CNA training and clinical hours	7	n/a	n/a	120	75

³ Based on data available here:

http://www.hpm.umn.edu/nhregsplus/NH%20Regs%20by%20Topic/NH%20Regs%20Topic%20Pdfs/Nursing%20Staffing%20Ratios/category_nursing_services_staff_ratios_FINAL.pdf

Short-Stay Residents

A short stay constitutes no more than 100 days spent in a long term care center. A short stay in a long term care center can provide a resident an opportunity for rehabilitation from an injury or illness, or provide additional support, temporarily easing the burden on regular caregivers.

Florida ranks better than the national median on four of seven short-stay measures, and ranks among the best ten on two of them:

- 5th best in portion of residents reporting moderate to severe pain (9.3% compared with 14.3% nationally)
- 3rd best in of portion of residents with pressure ulcers that are new or have worsened

On all measures for which trend data is available, Florida improved its performance as well as its rank from 2014 to 2018. This is particularly meaningful given that Florida outpaced nationwide improvements in these measures during this same period. This includes improved rankings on:

- Managing residents' pain
- Limiting the incidence of pressure ulcers
- Reducing the use of antipsychotic drugs

SHORT-STAY RESIDENTS FACTORS	Florida Rank 2018	Florida Rank 2014	Rank Change 2014-2018	Florida Value 2018	National Median Value 2018
... who self-report moderate to severe pain	5	8	+ 3	9.3%	14.3%
... with pressure ulcers that are new or worsened	3	6	+ 3	0.5%	0.8%
... who newly received an antipsychotic medication	36	43	+ 7	2.1%	1.7%
... who made improvements in function	19	N/A	N/A	70.5%	69.2%
... who have had an outpatient emergency department visit	11	N/A	N/A	10.5%	12.4%

Long-Stay Residents

A long-stay resident is one who remains in the care of a long term care center for more than 100 days. The following metrics report the quality of care afforded to long-stay long term care center residents. This section tracks measures relating to a resident’s mental health and improvements or declines in physical health, vaccination rates, and medications.

In five of the 15 metrics studied, Florida ranks among the top ten in the nation. These positive results include measurements of the portion of residents:

- Needing increased help with daily activities (13.1% compared with 15.0% nationally)
- Experiencing moderate to severe pain (3.6% compared with 6.5% nationally)
- Experiencing depressive symptoms (1.0% compared with 3.4% nationally)
- Experiencing one or more falls with major injury (2.8% compared with 3.5% nationally)
- Receiving pneumococcal vaccine (96.5% compared with 93.8% nationally)

LONG-STAY RESIDENTS FACTORS	Florida Rank 2018	Florida Rank 2014	Rank Change 2014-2018	Florida Value 2018	National Median Value 2018
...whose need for help with daily activities has increased	8	8	0	13.1%	15.7%
...who self-report moderate to severe pain	5	4	- 1	3.6%	6.5%
...who have/had a catheter inserted and left in their bladder	12	13	+ 1	1.5%	1.9%
...with a urinary tract infection	24	36	+ 12	2.9%	3.0%
...who have depressive symptoms	3	5	+ 2	1.0%	3.4%
...who were physically restrained	22	42	+ 20	0.3%	0.3%
...experiencing one or more falls with major injury	8	7	+ 1	2.8%	3.5%
...given the seasonal flu vaccine	39	41	+ 2	94.4%	95.7%
...given the pneumococcal vaccine	10	25	+ 15	96.5%	93.8%
...who received an antipsychotic medication	20	37	+ 17	14.5%	14.9%
...whose ability to move independently worsened	12	N/A	N/A	16.9%	18.5%

Ratings & Awards

CMS computes a rating from one to five stars based on measurements in three categories: Health Inspections, Staffing, and Quality Measures. These star ratings, along with awards from the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), enable consumers to gauge the overall quality of long term care centers in any given state.

Florida is consistently a top recipient of industry ratings and awards. In all cases, Florida surpasses the national median and places among the top ten states in earning various recognitions for quality. In the years from 2014 to 2018, Florida greatly improved its standing in CMS ratings. Florida centers:

- Have an average star rating (3.8) higher than the national median (3.4)
- Have a greater portion of highly rated centers (60%) compared with the national median (55%)
- Have a lower portion of low-rated centers (25%) compared with the national median (31%)
- Increased the volume of AHCA/NCAL awards from 40 in 2014 to 63 in 2018
- More than quintupled the proportion of centers receiving AHCA/NCAL awards from 1.5% in 2014 to 9% in 2018

RATINGS & AWARDS FACTORS	Florida Rank 2018	Florida Rank 2014	Rank Change 2014-2018	Florida Value 2018	National Median Value 2018
Average Star Rating	7	16	+ 9	3.8	3.4
Proportion of Highly-Rated centers	8	20	+ 12	60%	55%
Proportion of Low-Rated centers	7	22	+ 15	25%	31%
Proportion of centers Awarded by the AHCA/NCAL	7	4	- 3	9%	4%
Number of centers receiving AHCA/NCAL awards	1	N/A	N/A	63 (up from 40 in 2014)	N/A