



Talking Points: CMS Consumer Alert Icon

- LeadingAge opposes the use of the Consumer Alert Icon in Nursing Home Compare to identify nursing homes that have been cited for abuse and neglect. CMS should not put this new tool in place on October 23rd.
- Abuse and neglect must never be tolerated. But the icon doesn't provide consumers with adequate information, for example, to discern between a case where a resident did not endure harm and the staff person was immediately fired versus a situation where a resident endured physical harm. To someone looking for the right nursing home, a red stop sign is a red stop sign.
- People seeking nursing home care for a loved one are at a notoriously difficult point in their lives. They've made a tough decision to seek residential care and want the warmest, most homelike, safest setting where their family member will receive exceptional care and be treated with respect.
- Families deserve the best we can offer in terms of transparency when seeking care for their loved ones. The Alert icon is a blunt tool that muddies the choices. It is a disservice to consumers that can lead to confusion during a very difficult time.
- The icon adds nothing to the information already available in Nursing Home Compare and is likely to cause unnecessary worry to many residents and family members of people already living in a nursing home.
- Beyond that, the Consumer Alert Icon is demoralizing for providers and their staff who passionately care about what happens to the people they serve, including LeadingAge's 2,000 members who operate not for profit nursing homes.
- We owe it to residents, their family members, and the people who provide nursing home care to fix the broken survey system that sweeps all "abuse and neglect" incidents under one un-nuanced umbrella.
- CMS should not implement the plan to use the Consumer Alert Icon. Instead we advocate for more dialog with CMS to discuss positive ways to improve care and move away from an inflexible system that only looks to punish nursing homes, not incentivize them in positive ways to provide the best care.