

Assisted Living Report Card Frequently Asked Questions: Minnesota Department of Health Survey Ratings

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How will Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) survey ratings be displayed on the Assisted Living (AL) Report Card?

New ratings based on MDH surveys of assisted living communities will be added to the [AL Report Card](#) in early 2025. MDH survey findings will be used to measure resident health, safety, and staffing. These measures will each be displayed as a star rating (out of five) based on how the assisted living's MDH survey findings compare to the state average for assisted living communities.

How will a provider's MDH survey findings get turned into scores and star ratings for the report card?

Minnesota assisted living laws require MDH to survey licensed assisted living providers at least once every two years. The purpose of these surveys is to evaluate and monitor the care and services provided to assisted living residents and determine if the provider is complying with assisted living licensing requirements. When MDH identifies a provider is out of compliance with a licensing requirement, MDH issues a correction order to the provider. Correction orders are assigned a scope and severity level that categorizes the seriousness of the provider's noncompliance with the requirement. The scope of noncompliance refers to how widespread the problem is; it can be isolated, pattern, or widespread. The severity level of the noncompliance ranges from no actual harm with a potential for minimal harm to a resident, to situations of immediate harm to resident health or safety.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has contracted with researchers at the University of Minnesota (UMN) to calculate MDH survey ratings for the AL Report Card. When calculating these ratings, UMN gives the assisted living a score for each correction order that fits into the resident health, safety, or staffing categories (correction orders that are not classified into one of the three categories are not scored). UMN weights the score for each correction order by scope and severity following CMS' scoring for nursing homes on Care Compare. See the [CMS Nursing Home Compare Technical Users' Guide](#) for more information. A list of correction orders that are included in each measure is on DHS' [AL Report Card information page](#).

UMN adds the assisted living's correction order scores in the resident health, safety, and staffing categories to calculate the total score for each category. Each assisted living is then assigned a star rating (out of five) for each category based on where their score falls within the star rating threshold. UMN calculates this star rating threshold based on the state average score for each category. Assisted livings with scores higher than the state average will receive a lower star rating and assisted livings with scores lower than the state average will receive a higher star rating.

What is the star rating threshold DHS plans to use for MDH survey ratings?

For the AL Report Card, a threshold is a fixed score that defines the upper and lower boundaries for each 5-star category based on the previous two years of MDH survey data. Currently, UMN is calculating a star rating threshold based on 2022-2023 MDH survey data. DHS plans to publish this threshold on its [AL Report Card information page](#) by July 31, 2024. The star rating threshold will be updated annually on July 1 based on the most recent survey data available.

How did DHS decide which MDH survey tags to include in these ratings?

DHS contracted with UMN in 2019 to conduct a [literature review that identified nine assisted living quality domains or measures](#). They gathered [community feedback](#) to identify assisted living quality measures of most importance to Minnesota stakeholders; these were staffing, safety, and resident health outcomes. Using findings from this previous work, UMN identified a list of MDH survey tags related to resident health, safety, and staffing in consultation with DHS, MDH, and the AL Report Card [Stakeholder Advisory Group](#). DHS uses this list for the resident health, safety, and staffing report card measures. A list of tags that are included in each measure is on DHS' [AL Report Card information page](#).

How often will a provider's survey ratings be updated?

DHS will publish new resident health, safety, and staffing ratings for an assisted living each time it's surveyed by MDH. It may take up to six months after the MDH survey has been completed for DHS to publish new ratings on the report card.

How does DHS take an assisted living's characteristics into account when calculating ratings?

Certain characteristics that are out of a provider's control may make it more challenging for an assisted living to get a higher resident health, safety, and staffing rating. DHS has contracted with UMN to analyze MDH's assisted living survey data and observe whether meaningful differences in scores exist by assisted living size, geography, and license type. DHS will decide whether to adjust provider scores based on UMN's final recommendation. DHS plans to publish its decision on the [AL Report Card information page](#) by July 31, 2024.

What happens to a provider's MDH survey ratings if they request a reconsideration of a correction order?

Following a survey, if the licensed assisted living provider disagrees with MDH's findings the provider may request MDH conduct an independent review of the correction orders, which includes review of the scope and severity of the noncompliance, known as a request for reconsideration. DHS plans to publish report card ratings based on MDH's initial survey findings; however, if a licensed assisted living provider requests reconsideration of correction orders included in their report card ratings, the AL Report Card will indicate which ratings are based on correction orders under reconsideration. If the survey findings are changed by MDH, DHS will revise the provider's report card rating.