

### **ProPublica Database**

As you may know, a web-based news organization named “[ProPublica](#)” is offering a “keyword” searchable database for nursing facilities using inspection reports and complaint information from the federal site, [NH Compare](#). The government site now includes the “narrative” portion of survey reports (2567s) which describes facility deficiencies. ProPublica’s web site has a fuller explanation of the search tool’s uses and capabilities. The site does not include plans of correction. Due to its complexity, the database is not really geared to an average consumer looking to choose a nursing home.

**Following are discussion points that may be helpful in a conversation about ProPublica generated questions.**

#### **Issues with the Database**

- The ProPublica database can be outdated and contain errors carried over from its source, the federal government.
- This data only highlights deficiencies, complaints and penalties. Users are left with an incomplete picture of a facility that defines ‘success’ and quality only in a regulatory context by the level of fines levied and the violations tallied – not by the quality of care, or quality of life at a facility.
- The data omits “Plans of Correction” and disputed citations which is a critical part of understanding how well a nursing facility is operated.
- ProPublica’s new search instrument does not advance efforts to focus on outcomes and person centered care in nursing homes. It is a snapshot of a moment in time, not 24/7/12.

#### **Other Issues**

- ProPublica does not establish a new standard of transparency for consumers or news reporters searching for information to help them choose a skilled nursing facility or gain insight into operating one.
- Understanding and finding value in ProPublica’s search results requires above-average knowledge of the regulatory process which means it is not useful to most consumers. For example:
  - Comparing terms between states is difficult. Many terms have nuanced meanings state-to-state.
  - Comparing inspection reports both within and between states is unreliable due to surveyor experience and subjectivity. This is a problem well-known to federal and state officials.
- Consumer satisfaction in 2010 averaged 88% nationally. Nursing facilities with exceptionally high customer and staff satisfaction ratings can have a negative incident that is isolated in scope within the facility. This complexity may not be understood by consumers or reporters and lead them to inaccurate conclusions about a highly-regarded nursing facility.

- There is no indication of the scope of a problem.
- A search for instances of the word “**abuse**” produced many hits nationwide. In choosing one facility at random, this keyword uncovered these “shocking” results:
  - Missing specialty socks (Resident #56),
  - Missing bras (Resident #50),
  - Lack of resolution to a request for a room air conditioner (Resident #103).

### **The Profession is Committed to Continuous Quality Improvement**

- The long term care profession works to create an environment which is **resident-centered, outcome-oriented**, and with a **consistent** system of oversight.
- The LTC profession is committed to collaboration to measure and achieve quality of long-term care, report it, support it, and improve it – that’s the best path to a high-quality, resident-centered, provider-friendly system that everyone can afford.
- AHCA has sponsored or partnered with key stakeholder groups to hold many quality initiatives over the past decade, such as government initiated Nursing Home Quality Initiative, the profession-driven Quality First, a coalition-based Advancing Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes and currently The Quality Initiative, which aims to safely reduce the use of antipsychotic drugs and lower the rate of hospital transfers from SNFs.
- AHCA sponsors a yearly national quality competition called The Quality Awards which is built on the foundation of the Baldrige Program of Excellence.