

The 2018 fourth quarter Your Top-Line was released on January 3, 2019 for Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) members. This issue included a projection on what the SNF’s survey rating would be if the survey freeze was lifted today and the survey scoring rules used before the freeze were kept the same. To illustrate how we created these projections, let’s examine a blinded example.

Walkthrough of an example projection

In this blinded example, this SNF currently has a survey rating of 3 stars under the freeze. During the freeze, their two-cycle survey score was 22.4 points.

They had one standard health survey during the freeze on April 13, 2018 and received one D-level deficiency during it. Using the results from that survey, we calculated their 3-cycle survey score to be 13.3 points.

Table 1 below shows side-by-side how their survey score was calculated during the freeze versus in the projection. All the standard health deficiencies that counted during the freeze also counted toward the projected score, but for fewer points due to a lower weight after rolling the cycles forward.

Table 1: Example Scoring- Survey Freeze versus Projection

Survey Freeze					Projection				
Cycle	Survey Date	Scope/Severity	Cycle Weight	Points	Cycle	Survey Date	Scope/Severity	Cycle Weight	Points
2	3/3/16	D	40%	1.6	3	3/3/16	D	16.7%	0.7
2	3/3/16	F	40%	6.4	3	3/3/16	F	16.7%	2.7
1	2/23/17	D	60%	2.4	2	2/23/17	D	33.3%	1.3
1	2/23/17	F	60%	9.6	2	2/23/17	F	33.3%	5.3
1	2/23/17	D	60%	2.4	2	2/23/17	D	33.3%	1.3
					1	4/13/18	D	50%	2.0
Total Points (Sum of Points Column)				22.4					13.3

Deficiency Source: Nursing Home Compare, April 2018 and December 2018

After calculating a projected survey score for every facility in the state, we ranked ordered the facilities by their score. We then applied the forced distribution CMS used before the freeze to assign 10 percent of the SNFs in the state with the lowest score five stars in survey and the 20 percent with the highest score one star. Two, three, and four-star survey ratings were then evenly split among the rest.

Table 2 below compares the survey score ranges for survey star ratings during the survey freeze to those in the projection. The score ranges are not drastically different between the freeze and the projection because survey performance during the freeze was like prior performance.

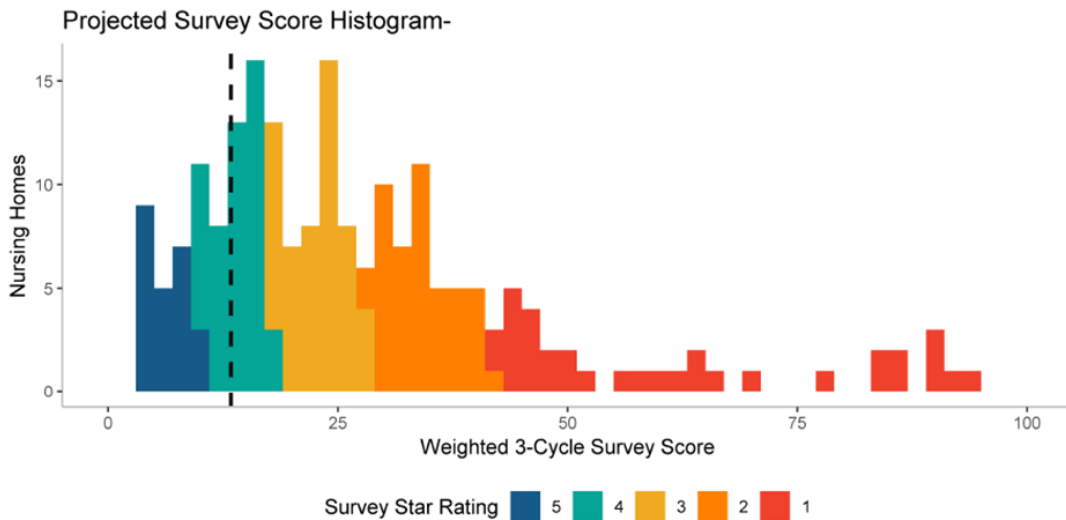
Table 2: Example Survey Rating to Score Ranges- Survey Freeze versus Projection

		Survey Freeze	Projection
Survey Star Rating	Percent of State's SNF	Survey Score Range	Survey Score Range
5-Stars	10%	<8.0	<9.3
4-Stars	23.33%	8.0-19.2	9.3-17.3
3-Stars	23.33%	19.2-29.6	17.3-27.3
2-Stars	23.33%	29.6-48.0	27.3-41.3
1-Star	20%	>48.0	>41.3

In the Top-Line, there is a graphic depiction of the translation of projected survey points to projected survey star rating using a histogram. The horizontal x-axis is the projected survey score, and the vertical y-axis represents the number of nursing homes with a given survey score. Each color corresponds to a different survey star rating. As you move to the right on the histogram, you have a higher survey score and lower survey star rating.

The dashed line in the histogram represents your SNF. In our example, the SNF had a projected survey score of 13.3, which puts it in the green shaded projected four star survey range.

Figure 1: Example State Histogram with SNF's Projected Survey Score and Rating



Frequently Asked Questions:

– **Why assume no change to the survey scoring rules?**

Based on the survey data available on [Nursing Home Compare](#) and CMS's Quality Certification & Oversight Reports ([QCOR](#)). SNFs have performed similarly under the new survey process as they did under the prior requirements.

Returning to old 3-cycle survey scoring rules provides consistency. Based on our projected scores 57% of SNFs would not have a change in their survey star rating, and another 38% of SNFs would only have a 1 star change to their survey rating.

– **Does the projected survey score include complaint surveys and deficiencies?**

Yes, it does! Using the [health deficiency file](#) from Nursing Home Compare, we were able to assign complaint deficiencies to a survey cycle and thus weight them appropriately towards the total projected survey score.

– **When will we officially know when and how the survey freeze will be lifted?**

We do not know. The latest from [CMS is the freeze will be lifted in the Spring of 2019](#) and that they continue to monitor the outcomes of the new survey process. As soon as we learn more from CMS, we will be sure to pass the information along and update our projection.

– **How do I access my Top-Line to see my SNF's survey projection?**

If you cannot find the email from January 3 to your 2018 fourth quarter Top-Line, do not worry. [You can access current and past Top-Lines through LTC Trend Tracker by following these easy steps.](#)

If you need to register for access to LTC Trend Tracker or have other questions, visit our [home page](#) or email help@lctrendtracker.com.