

Good morning. Let's talk about those Medicare star ratings and the ACC a little more. It's really easy to look at this for yourselves; you just search for "nursing homes compare," go to the Medicare site, type in your zip code and if you live in Sullivan County, you will see the ratings for the Sullivan County Adult Care Center and others nearby. The overall rating for the ACC is still 1. The Commissioner tried to put a spin on this last week, but he was referring to one of the 3 subcategories' subcategories, the staffing to patient ratio. It's true that some of the sub subcategories used for these star ratings look ok, but the bad ones are really very bad, and that's why the ACC's rating is as bad as it can be.

The star ratings actually represent a wealth of data compiled to show what is going on at the nursing home, as opposed to Mr. Perello or Salamone walking down the hall and doing a sniff test. The overall rating for staffing is still 2 stars, in spite of the good staff to patient ratio, in part because the RN turnover rate is 73.7%, compared to the average rate in NY of under 50%. One of the other major reasons that the overall rating is 1 star is that the ACC got about 150% as many citations last year as is average for a nursing home in New York. By the way, if you click under "ownership details" on the overall rating page, you will see that Nancy Buck and Laura Quick are listed as the managers of the ACC. Somebody should probably correct that.

There are other nursing homes nearby with an overall 1 star rating, and others with 5 stars as close as Orange County, both for profit and non profit facilities. Yes, not all nursing homes have staffing problems. According to the Medicare compare website, staffing problems are not endemic to all nursing homes in New York State, as certain people would like us to believe, and there are nursing homes nearby, right now, which have solved the medical staffing shortage. Infinitecare has in reality managed the ACC for over two years and staffing is a problem that has only gotten worse, to the point where evidently all the RNs are per diems. Imagine running a garage where all the mechanics can work whenever they feel like it.

I do understand that some of you are tired of hearing about the ACC, but I think you'll have to endure that discomfort for as long as you continue to ignore the needs of our elderly and disabled residents. I hope that you understand that my views are shared by many of your constituents. Admission to the ACC is not dependent on which political party you may agree with, and to a large extent, Sullivan County residents have supported the county nursing home regardless of party affiliation.