

FEDERAL FIVE STAR RATINGS: NURSING HOMES IN NEW YORK STATE¹

Introduction to the Five Star Rating System.

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created the Five-Star Quality Rating System to help consumers, their families, and caregivers compare nursing homes more easily and to help identify areas about which they may want to ask questions. The federal five star rating system uses three sources of data:

(1) Inspections (three most recent annual inspections and all complaint surveys of the last three years); (2) Staffing hours per resident per day – RNs, LPNs and CNAs (numbers are self-reported by the facility and are based upon the two weeks period just before a survey); and (3) Quality Measures such as whether residents have gotten their flu shots, are in pain, or are losing weight (measures are self-reported by facilities).

Each facility is given a star rating for each source of data. One star means much below average; two stars means below average; three stars means average; four stars means above average; and five stars = much above average.

Overall scores are calculated by starting with the inspection rating. The top ten percent of facilities in each state are given a five star rating in inspections. The middle 70 percent receive a four, three or two star rating with an equal number in each category. The bottom 20 percent receive a one star rating in inspections.

Stars are added to, or subtracted from, the inspection rating depending on the star ratings of staffing and quality measures. For example, if the facility has a four or five star rating for staffing, an additional star is added to its inspection rating to get its overall rating. If it has a one star rating for staffing, a star is subtracted. If it has a two or three star rating, its inspection rating is its overall rating. If a facility has a five star rating for its quality measures, a star is added to its inspection rating, if it has a one star rating, it has a star subtracted.

In order to get a five star rating in staffing, a facility must meet both of the following two staffing standards that were identified in a CMS study: (1) having 4.08 hours of total direct care staffing time per resident per day and (2) having the direct care staff time include .55 hours of RN time per resident per day. To receive a four star rating, a facility must meet either of these standards. Similar to the inspection ratings, ratings for quality measures are calculated based upon comparison to other facilities.

While this system has a number of weaknesses: inspectors often do not identify problems; staffing and quality data are self-reported by the facilities; and some of the ratings are based upon comparing facilities to each other so that a five star rating may not mean good quality but just may mean that the facility is the best the state has, it does help the public to gain insights into the relative quality, strengths and weaknesses of the facilities in their area. Ratings for all nursing homes in the country can be found at www.medicare.gov (click on Nursing Home Compare).

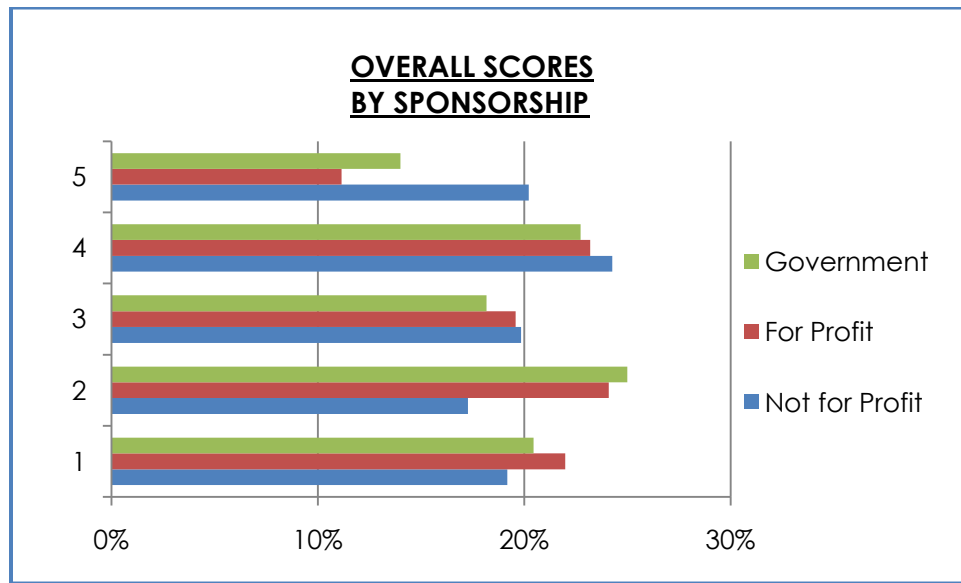
¹ All data is from July 2009 Medicare.gov website.

Differences in Star Ratings by Sponsorship and Location

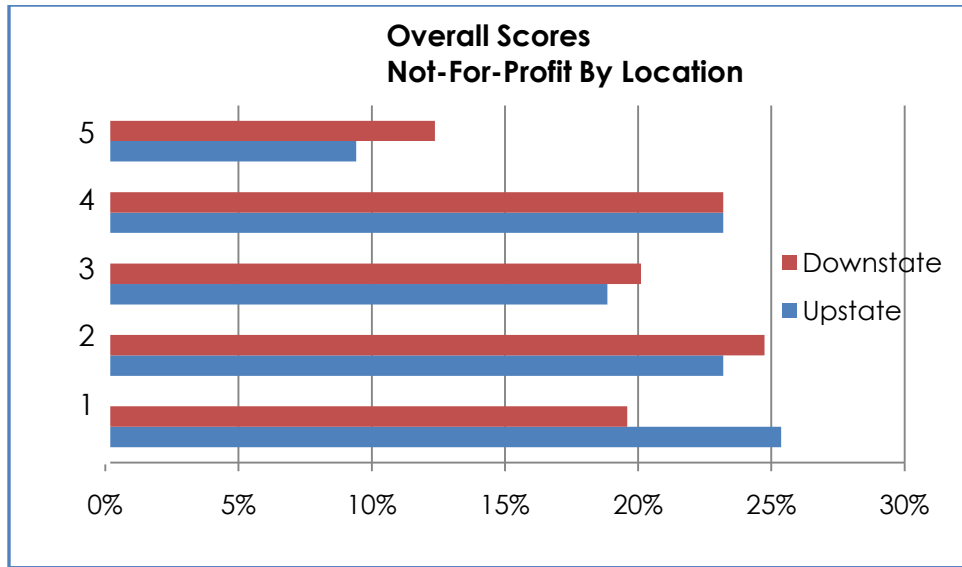
LTCCC conducted this research to examine the differences in star ratings based upon the sponsorship of the facility and its location in the state. National studies have indicated that not-for-profit facilities have better quality care on average and studies conducted by LTCCC on inspections conducted by New York State indicate that there are differences in the ability to identify and rate facility problems by inspectors/surveyors in different parts of the state. Our studies have indicated that upstate surveyors tend to identify more serious problems than inspectors downstate. Thus, we were interested in sharing with the public how New York State facilities of different sponsorship and location fared on the five star rating.

There are three types of sponsorship of nursing homes in New York State: those that are not-for-profit, those that are run for-profit and those that are government owned (either by the county or the state). There are a total of 647 facilities in the state: 279 are not-for-profit; 323 are for-profit; and 45 are government run. There are about 315 facilities upstate and about 320 facilities downstate.

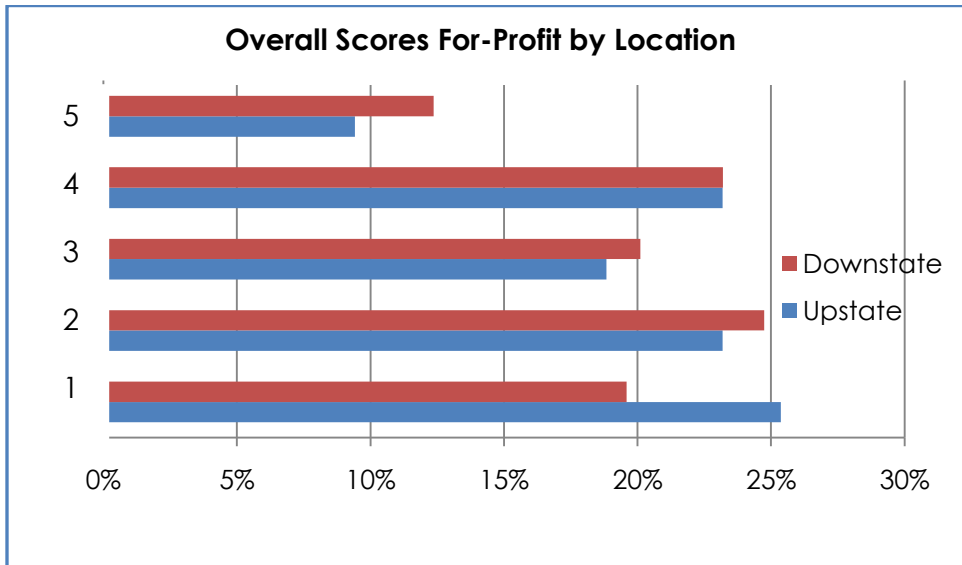
Overall Star Ratings



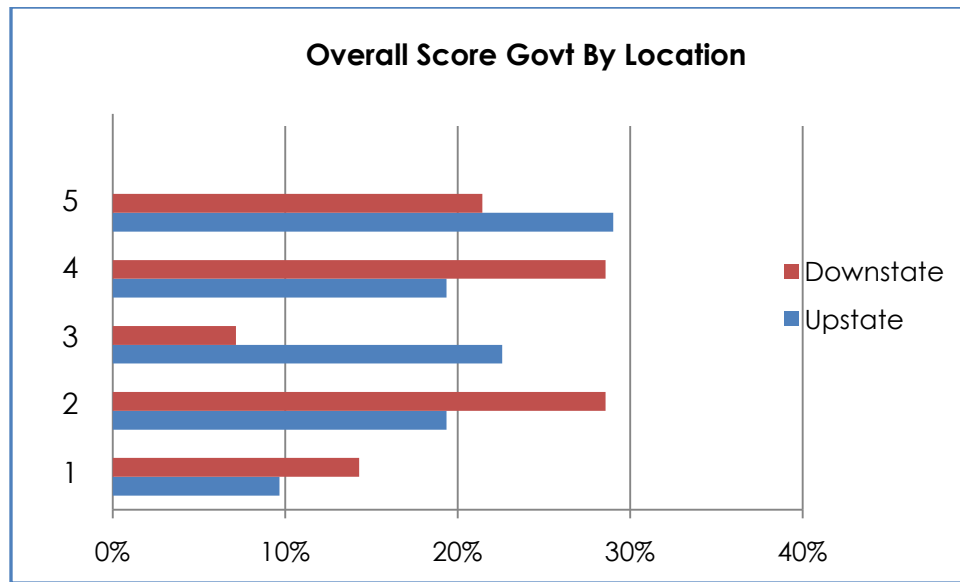
The table above shows that, overall, a higher percentage of not-for-profit facilities received a five or four star rating. For-profit facilities are the least likely to have a five star rating and the most likely to have a one star rating than either of the other types of facilities.



The table above indicates that downstate not-for-profit facilities tend to have much higher ratings than not-for-profit upstate facilities.

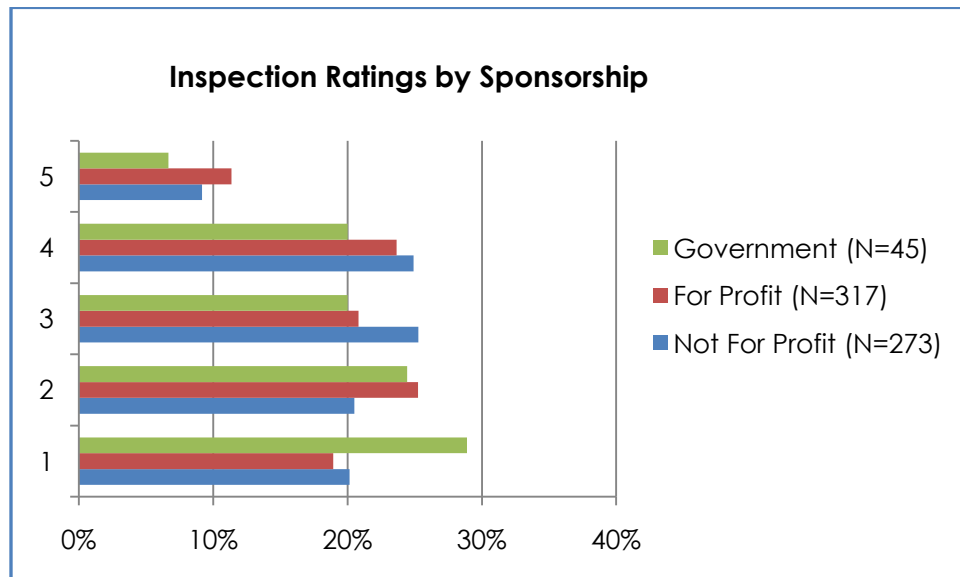


The above table indicates that, similar to the not-for-profit facilities, a higher percentage of downstate for-profit facilities received a five star rating than those upstate. Also, a higher percentage of upstate for-profit facilities received a one star rating than do those downstate.

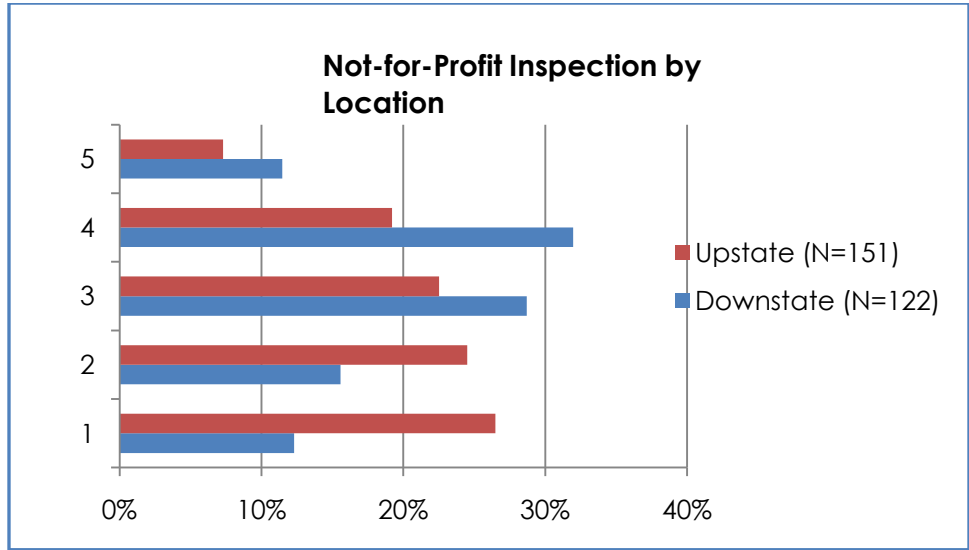


The table above indicates that, for government run facilities, the opposite is true. A higher percentage of upstate government run facilities received a 5 star rating and downstate facilities were more likely to have one star rating.

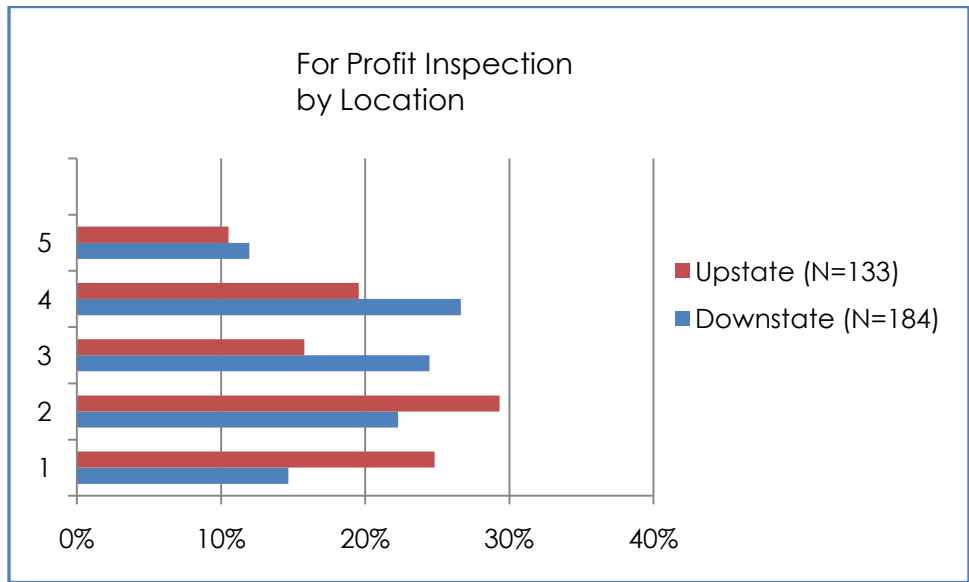
Inspection Results



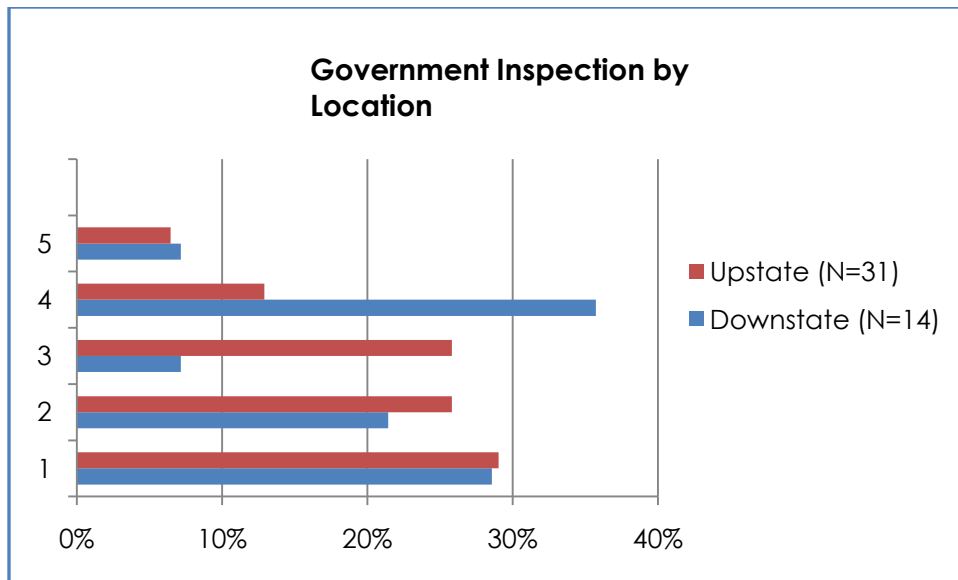
Looking at inspection star ratings by sponsorship, government run facilities tend to have the lowest ratings overall. Not-for-profit and for-profit star ratings are somewhat similar, though for-profits have a higher percentage of five star inspection ratings and a slightly lower percentage of one star inspection ratings.



Looking at the inspection ratings by sponsorship and location, downstate not-for-profit facilities tended to have higher ratings than those upstate.

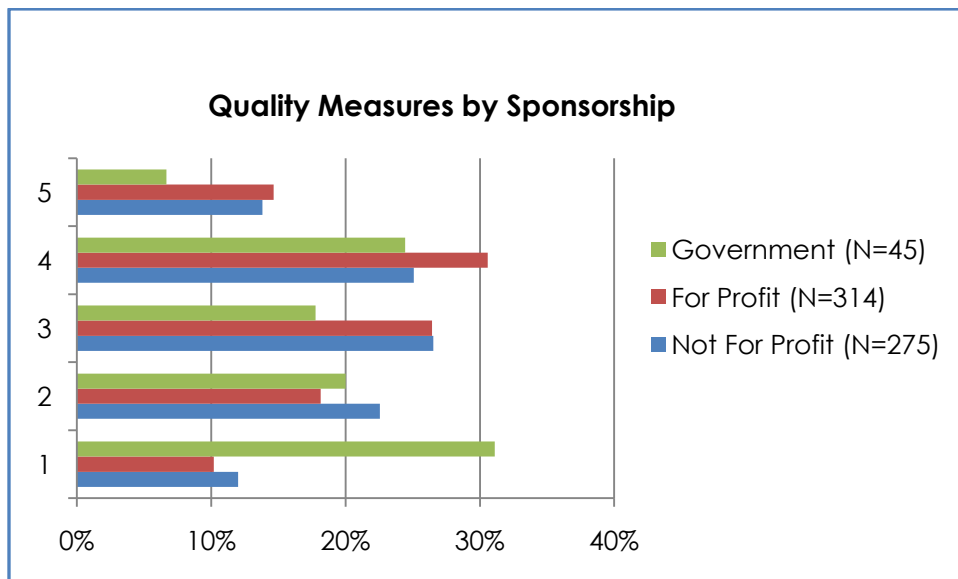


The ratings curve is similar for the for-profit facilities. Downstate facilities are more likely to have higher ratings than those that are upstate.

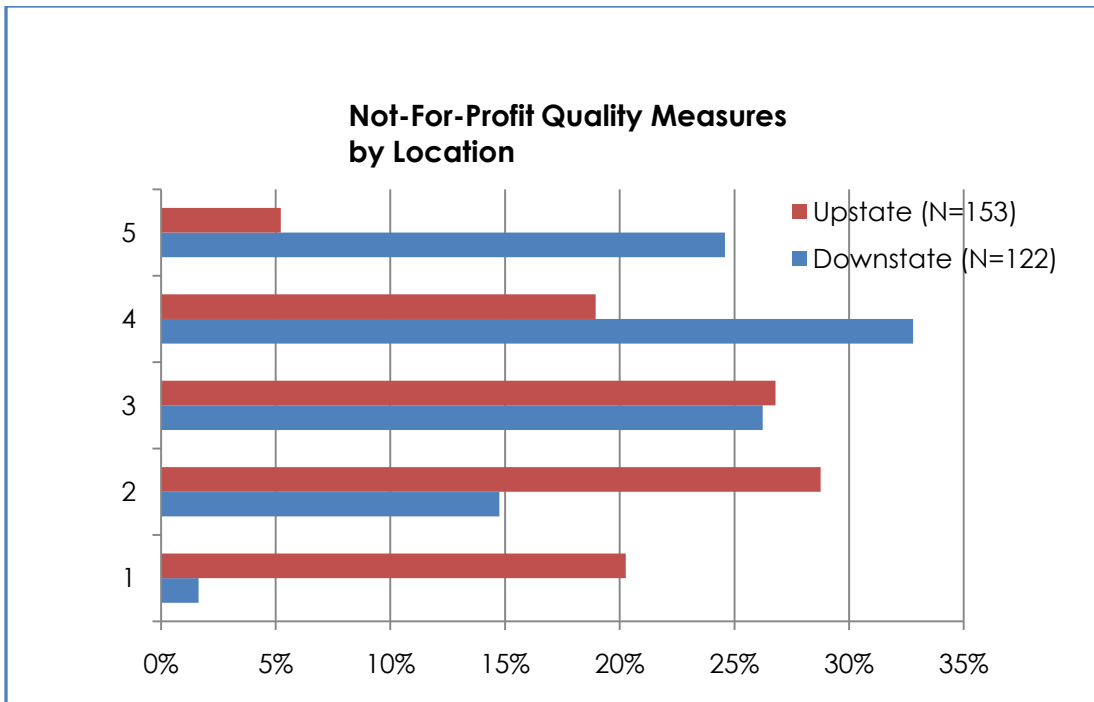


There are similar findings for government run facilities.

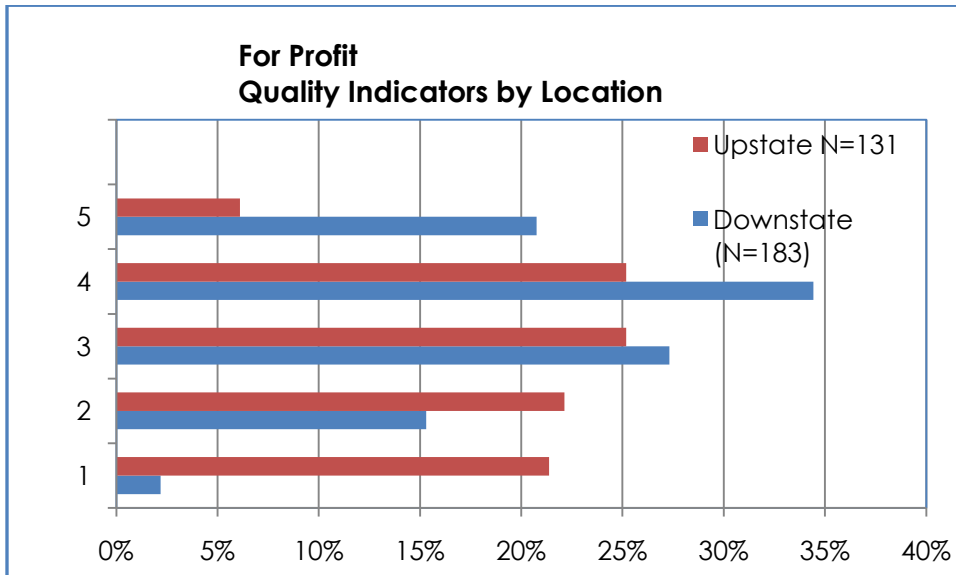
Quality Measures



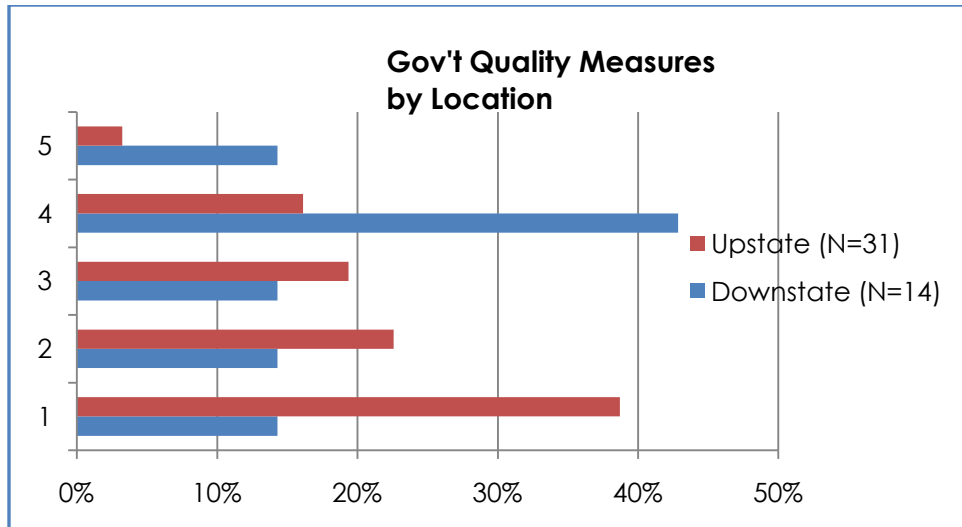
The table above indicates that government facilities as a whole have poorer ratings on quality measures than either for-profit or not-for-profit, with for-profits scoring slightly better than the not-for-profits in this regard.



This table shows that downstate not-for-profit facilities scored better on quality measures overall than those upstate.

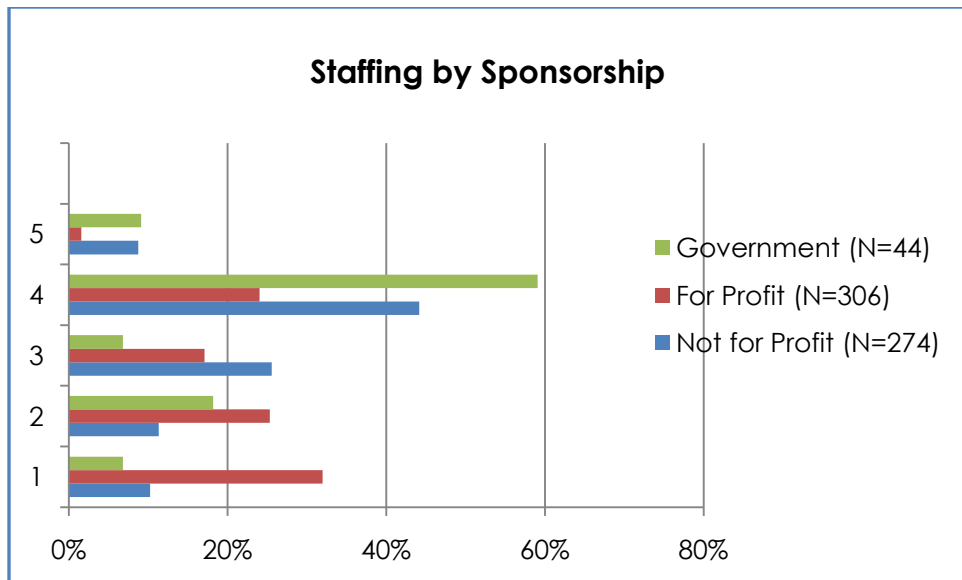


This table indicates a significant difference between upstate and downstate scores for for-profit facilities. Those that are downstate are much more likely to have high scores on quality measures and those that are upstate are much more likely to score well below average.

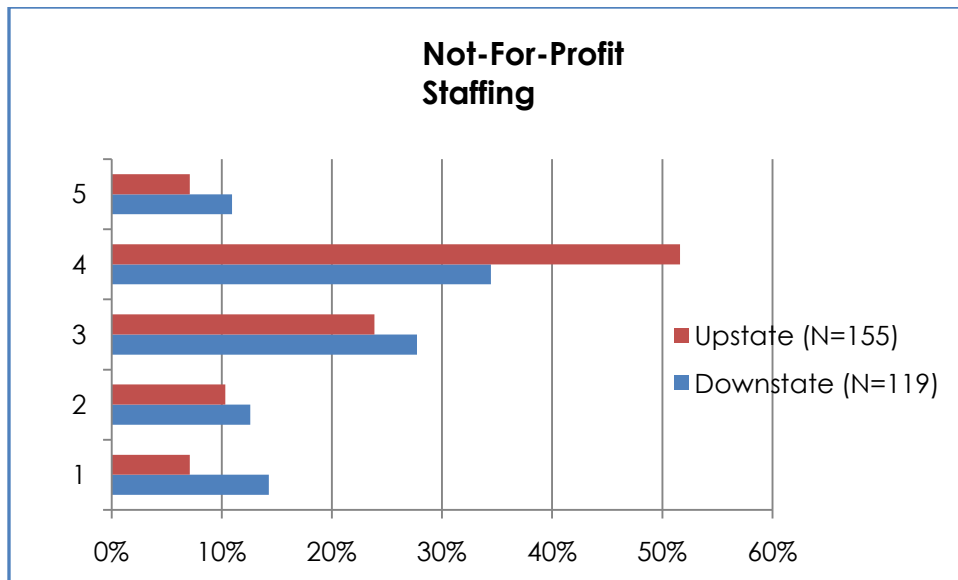


Similar to the other types of ownership, downstate government run facilities are likely to have higher scores on the quality measures.

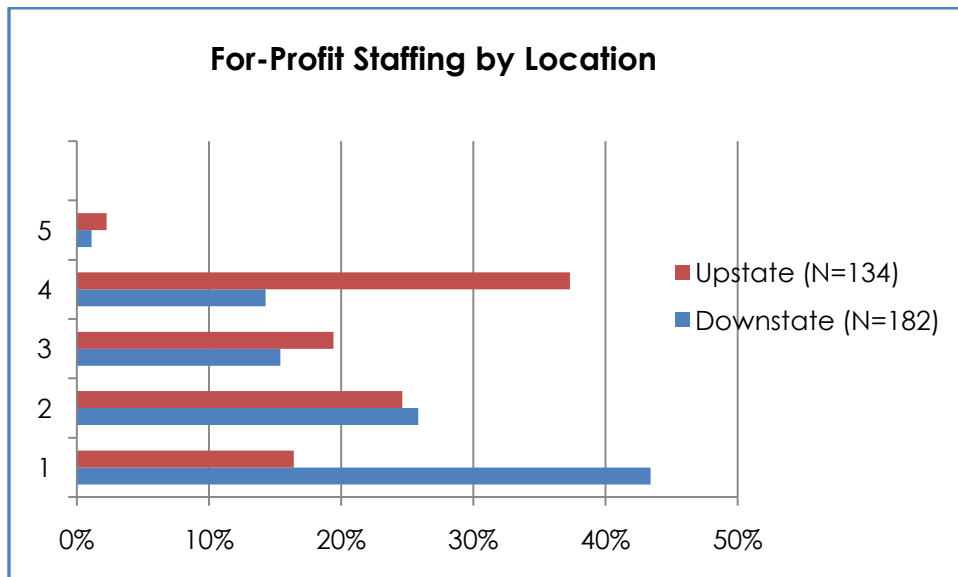
Staffing



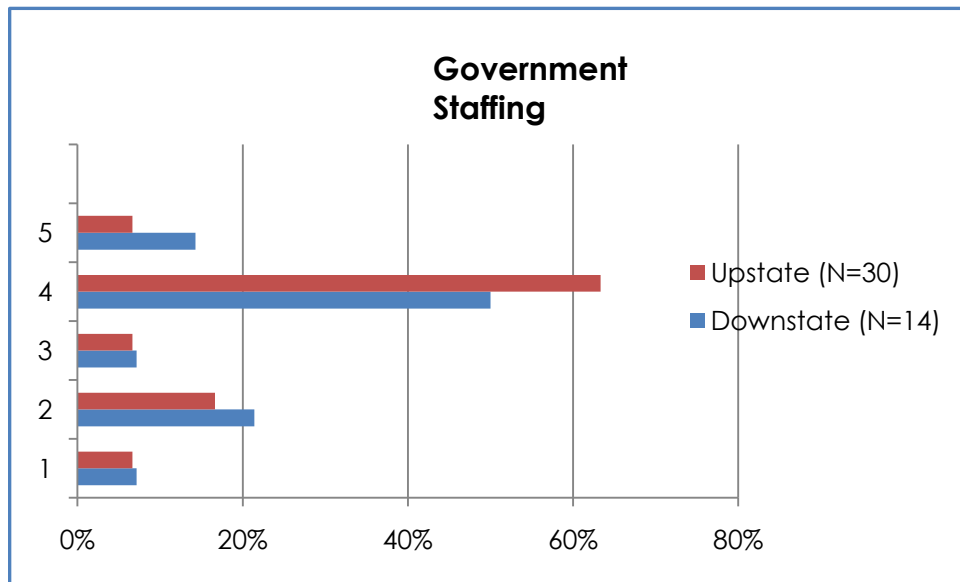
For-profits are much more likely to score very low on direct staffing levels than not-for profits and government run facilities. They are also the least likely – by a wide margin – to have five or four stars (i.e., have staffing that meets the basic standards identified in the federal (CMS) study upon which these ratings are based).



A higher percentage of downstate not-for-profit facilities have five star ratings on staffing while a higher percentage of upstate facilities have four star ratings. Downstate not-for-profit facilities are more likely to be far below average (one star) on staffing than those upstate.



Upstate for-profit facilities have higher percentages of high scores on direct care staffing than those that are downstate. While both regions have very few facilities ranking five stars on this indicator, the differences between the two regions are conspicuous at the two extremes: upstate for-profit facilities are about twice as likely to have four or five star ratings and downstate facilities are roughly three times more likely to have a one star rating.



The data indicate that there are not as strong differences overall between upstate and downstate staffing levels in government owned facilities.