

For expert comment: Missouri nursing homes have happy clients, MU researchers say

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As loved ones age and face challenges that prevent them from living on their own, family members often struggle with the decision to place their relatives in nursing homes. Sometimes viewed as last alternatives, long-term care facilities can have reputations as hopeless, institutionalized environments. Now, those negative perceptions are changing, say two University of Missouri researchers in the Sinclair School of Nursing. After conducting a statewide survey of Missouri nursing homes, the researchers found that nearly 90 percent of nursing home residents and their family members are satisfied with the residents' long-term care facilities.

"The findings paint a positive picture of nursing homes that contradict previous perceptions," said Marilyn Rantz, Curators Professor in the nursing school, who helped conduct the survey. "Nursing home administrators have worked diligently throughout the past decade to improve the quality of care delivered to residents and to make care settings more homelike. Their efforts have made a difference in improving perceptions of long-term care facilities."

The survey evaluated nearly 200 nursing homes throughout the state and was the first to measure residents' and family members' overall satisfaction with the quality of care, quality of life and quality of service provided in the homes. Eighty-six percent of residents and their family members rated their overall satisfaction with their care facilities as

excellent or good. More than 80 percent of both groups rated their or their loved ones' quality of life, quality of care and quality of service as excellent or good. Residents and their family members said they would recommend their nursing homes to others nearly 90 percent of the time.

Marcia Flesner, a clinical educator in the nursing school, assisted Rantz with the survey. Caring for aging and vulnerable populations is a complex business, Flesner said. She likened nursing home administration to running a small community.

"When [family members](#) put loved ones in nursing homes, they want perfection," Flesner said. "They want the best care possible for their relatives in places that feel like home. The results indicate Missouri nursing homes are doing a good job, though room for improvement exists."

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services funded the survey that was developed by MyInnerView, a national research firm that evaluates long-term [care facilities](#). [Nursing homes](#) could participate in the survey at no cost, and each facility that participated received its own report outlining its strengths and areas for improvement.

"The individualized reports will help nursing home administrators target specific areas for improvement, which will allow them to use their funds wisely," said Rantz, who also leads the Quality Improvement Program for Missouri (QIPMO), a state-funded program that provides clinical services to skilled nursing facilities.

More information: An executive summary of survey results can be found at nursinghomehelp.org

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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