

Eli's Rehab Report

Rehab Agencies: Be Alert and Ready When Survey Time Hits

The day may come sooner than you know, thanks to Quad-A involvement.

If you're a rehab agency waiting for an initial Medicare certification survey, you may think that day will never come, thanks to rehab agencies being on Tier-4 priority status with CMS. Don't let this long wait affect your standards — especially with the updated requirements CMS issued last spring in Transmittal 83.

"The **American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities** (AAAASF) has been given approval by CMS to do surveys on CMS' behalf — which will help your survey get done in a more timely manner," says **Laura Cantrell, MS, PT**, director of outpatient services for **Infinity Rehab**, based in Wilsonville, OR.

Plus: "Rehab agencies now have the option of electing for accreditation of their rehab agency and extension location, and when successful are 'deemed' to have passed the survey and certification requirements without a state survey," says **Nancy Beckley, MS, MBA, CHC**, president of **Nancy Beckley & Associates Rehab Compliance Resources**, based in Milwaukee, WI.

"AAAASF worked extensively with the **National Association of Rehab Providers and Agencies** (NARA) to facilitate the program, and NARA rehab agency experts participated in the training of inspectors (surveyors)," Beckley explains. "The AAAASF, affectionately known as 'Quad A' has also extended a membership discount to NARA members."

That said, now's the time to get your rehab agency's policies and procedures into ship-shape. Review Transmittal 83 (<http://tinyurl.com/kamb89x>) for any new or updated requirements.

Example: "Rehab agencies are required to document a number of items annually, such as the annual statistical report; however, the updated guidelines suggest a quarterly statistical report," Beckley says.

"Rehab agencies should also ensure that their required committee meetings (such as infection control) are documented and that continuing education needs of staff are assessed and documented," Beckley adds. "Most importantly, in addition to the required program administration, there needs to be an effective policy on an acting administrator, if the administrator is not available."