

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### Clinical Issues SURVEYOR SAYS: DON'T DITCH THE WATER PITCHERS

What if a resident isn't ingesting her calculated "cc" requirements but seems OK? Will surveyors jump on you if you get rid of the water pitchers that residents never seem to use in favor of a hydration cart and station?

In answering these questions posed by nurses attending the June NADONA conference, surveyor Stephanie Williams with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services noted that residents' actual fluid requirements reflect many factors, including their weight, activity levels and clinical condition. Staff should look at the "whole picture" to see if the resident who doesn't seem to be meeting her fluid quota shows any signs of dehydration. And a resident may be getting more fluid than staff realizes from foods such as gelatin, ice cream and foods with high-fluid content.

"In addition, some people say they have never been 'drinkers' in terms of consuming that much water or other fluids," Williams said.

Williams didn't appear too keen on the idea of foregoing water pitchers in residents' rooms even when the facility implements hydration stations or carts. She noted that some facilities are going to smaller pitchers that residents can lift more easily. Even though the pitchers need to be filled more often, residents are more likely to pour their own fluids and drink without staff assistance.

Laura Fain, DON for Leesburg Regional Medical Center, Nursing Center in Leesburg, FL, agrees. "Otherwise, you can't ensure residents have access to water when they are thirsty," she tells Eli.

Williams reported that some facilities are equipping chairs with cups in holders and constantly topping off residents' fluids when the residents are out of their rooms.