

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

News Briefs: Survey & Clinical News To Use

It isn't everything you might want to know about DAVE. But a June 20 Web cast hosted by the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** did provide an update on the new Data Assessment and Verification (DAVE) MDS audit program that the agency plans to begin rolling out nationwide this fall (to view the Web cast, go to cms.internetstreaming.com). The centralized intelligence program is aimed primarily at detecting and educating providers about patterns of MDS inaccuracies in an effort to improve the quality of data driving Medicare billing and resident care. Even so, facilities found to have significant MDS discrepancies may be targeted for surveys or medical reviews.

Worried about exposure of residents and staff to environmental pathogens such as Legionella, TB or varicella zoster virus? The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** in June released guidelines to help health care facilities protect patients and employees from inadvertent exposure to these and other environmental pathogens. The guidelines call for appropriate use of cleaners and disinfectants; maintenance of medical equipment; adherence to ventilation standards for specialized care environments; and prompt management of water intrusion into the facility. (Read the CDC guidelines online at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5210a1.htm. **Tips:** Aerosolized water from decorative fountains and showerheads in nursing homes can be a source of Legionnaires disease. The CDC guidelines provide guidance on how to remove, clean and disinfect showerheads and tap aerators monthly. The guidelines also advise against placing decorative fountains and fish tank aquariums in patient care areas. Providers should ensure disinfection and fountain maintenance if decorative fountains are used in public areas, the guidelines advise. Infection control specialist **Bob Sharbaugh** in Charleston, SC, advises facilities to monitor tap water in fish tanks and ornamental fountains once or twice a year for water-borne microorganisms, such as Aspergillus.

Check out the 2004 JCAHO standards for long-term care facilities. The **Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations** has posted the prepublication standards on its Web site (www.jcaho.org). The standards go into effect Jan. 1, 2004, and will be published in accreditation manuals this September. They include elements of performance that clearly specify what the Joint Commission expects long-term care facilities to do, JCAHOs **Marianna Kern Grachek** tells Eli.