

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### Quality Improvement: 3 Must-Do Survey Tactics Can Shoo Away F Tags

This three-pronged approach will keep the facility on its toes and in the know before, during and after an inspection.

Strategy No. 1: Realize that even a long-standing comfort zone with a familiar survey team can evaporate at any time. Some facilities go for years with a survey team with which they have a good relationship to the point that they get too comfortable with the survey process, says **Cheryl Boldt, RN**, a consultant with **Maun Lemke** in Omaha. Then they get a new survey team or a new survey team leader or a situation comes up so that everything changes. The facility team has to stay on top of things during the survey, she emphasizes.

Strategy No. 2: **Make sure administrators and managers are involved with residents and observing care year round.** Otherwise, "if, suddenly, managers show up on the floor and in residents' rooms during the survey, it's going to stick out like a sore thumb," Boldt cautions. Staff may even say to each other within earshot of surveyors, "You can tell it's a survey -- so and so is here."

Creative idea: Implement an "adopt a resident" program throughout the year where each manager gets to really know a group of residents and the residents' families, Boldt suggests. The manager regularly drops in on the residents to identify any unmet needs or problems.

Strategy No. 3: Create a sense of ownership among staff for the overall survey outcome. If you don't, staff may engage in "finger pointing" where one department blames the other for F tags, Boldt says. Create a bonus or salary increase incentive where the entire staff wins or loses based on the survey outcome, she suggests.