

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

SPECIAL FOCUS: Overcome Consumer, Surveyor Resistance To Alternative Remedies

Sidestep these anticipated problems.

Facilities offering alternative therapies can take steps to preempt concerns about approaches that are off the beaten track for long-term care.

For one, watch your terminology. **Sheryl Schutte, RN**, whose nursing facility offers alternative remedies, has found people accept the idea of nontraditional approaches better if you avoid using the words "alternative or complementary therapy or treatment."

A boom in complementary Rx with the Boomers? Schutte also believes the complementary treatments will be "more widely accepted" as Baby Boomers start entering long-term care. "They are more used to and interested in complementary treatments," says Schutte, director of nursing for **Alverno Health Care Facility** in Clinton, IA.

Also make sure the alternative treatments don't run afoul of OBRA requirements. Attorney **Annaliese Impink** believes that the therapies shouldn't pose a survey concern as long as:

- The resident's attending physician, or in his/her absence the medical director, determines that alternative therapy will not adversely affect the resident given the existing orders and the plan of care.
- The resident, family members and/or legal representative consents to the treatment.
- The alternative treatment is not contrary to the requirements of participation—for example, an herbal remedy that led to a drug reaction or caused the person to be unable to participate in activities or rehabilitation therapy, says Impink, senior VP and associate general counsel for **SavaSeniorCare Administrative Services LLC** in Atlanta.