

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

SURVEY & CLINICAL NEWS

If residents are taking Singulair, be on the lookout for behavior and mood changes and suicidality. The **Food & Drug Administration** recently alerted healthcare providers that the agency is investigating a possible association between the drug and behavior/mood changes, as well as suicidal thinking and behavior -- and suicide. Singulair is a leukotriene receptor antagonist used to treat asthma and allergic rhinitis.

Wondering how well trained surveyors performing Quality Indicator Surveys will be? CMS recently released federal minimum qualification standards for long-term care registered QIS surveyors and CMS-certified QIS trainers for states implementing the QIS process. The QIS is a new federally approved survey process for nursing homes that includes use of computer technology not used in the traditional survey process. CMS tested the QIS in Florida and is implementing the QIS statewide in states that participated in the initial demonstration (CA, CT, FL, KS, LA, MN and OH). CMS has selected three other states for implementation, as well, but hasn't named them yet. To review the qualification standards for QIS surveyors and trainers, go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/surveycertificationgeninfo/downloads/SCLetter08-14.pdf>.

New dementia diagnosis can trigger suicide in the elderly. A recent Danish study underscores the need to take suicidal behavior in elderly dementia sufferers seriously. Simply hearing the initial diagnosis of dementia can lead some people, especially those age 50 to 69, to commit suicide, according to "Hospital-Diagnosed Dementia and Suicide," published in a recent American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry. Taking into account depression, the researchers linked a dementia diagnosis to a three to 10 times higher risk of suicide among elderly with dementia. The study also suggests that even patients with advanced stages of dementia may be sufficiently suicidal to plan and carry out suicide.