

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Survey & Clinical News To Use

Ready for more new quality measures? The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** says it plans to bring two more quality measures online this fall: nurse staffing and weight loss (except in hospice patients). The National Quality Forum endorsed the two measures recently. The **American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging** opposed the inclusion of both measures in their current form, reports senior health policy analyst **Ruta Kadonoff**. In comments to NQF, AAHSA pointed out that the staffing measure does not meet the threshold criteria established by the NQF steering committee for measure selection. "There's no evidence of a formal, independent evaluation of the measure's validity," Kadonoff notes. And "two facilities with identical staffing but very different populations may in fact be at opposite ends of the spectrum with regard to quality," Kadonoff says.

Patients with chronic wounds may have a new treatment hope: electromagnetic therapy. CMS will cover the service starting July 1, the agency says in a recent national coverage determination. Medicare will cover e-magnetic therapy when a physician or physical therapist uses it to treat chronic Stage III or Stage IV pressure ulcers, arterial ulcers, diabetic ulcers and venous stasis ulcers. E-magnetic and electrical stimulation therapy are covered only once "appropriate standard wound therapy has been tried for at least 30 days" with no measurable signs of improved healing. The treating physician must evaluate the wound(s) "at least monthly" while e-magnetic therapy is used. E-magnetic therapy uses a pulsed magnetic field to induce current across the wound. Read the national coverage determination at www.cms.hhs.gov/manuals/pm_trans/R7NCD.pdf.