

# Long-Term Care Survey Alert

## Survey & Clinical News To Use

**CMS plans to get tougher with its Special Focus Facility Program for substandard nursing facilities.** The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** wants to target more nursing facilities - 30 percent more overall - for its Special Focus Facility (SFF) Program for SNFs that exhibit a persistent pattern of poor care. Facilities in the program undergo two surveys a year.

The program has to date targeted two substandard nursing facilities per state for remedial action and closer oversight. But CMS now expects larger states to do more to assist substandard facilities than smaller states, according to a **Center for Medicaid & State Operations** memo to state survey agency directors (S&C-05-13). CMS wants states to shore up the SFF program in two other key ways:

1. **Better selection of poorly performing facilities.** To expand the list of facilities targeted by the program, CMS wants states to use three years of survey data rather than one.
2. **Tougher Enforcement.** Facilities that go 18 months and three surveys without significant improvement will receive a notice of termination from Medicare/Medicaid participation. States can remove facilities that make significant improvements from the program and move on to other troubled facilities.

CMS created the SFF in March 1998 as one of the initiatives of the Nursing Home Oversight and Improvement Program.

Read the memo at [www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/survey-cert/sc0513.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/survey-cert/sc0513.pdf)

**Beware cardiovascular risks associated with these NSAIDs:** A clinical trial studying the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs for prevention of Alzheimer's disease has been suspended following revelation of the cardiovascular risks associated with the NSAIDs.

The **National Institutes of Health** announced last month that investigators suspended until further notice the used of naproxen (Aleve) and celecoxib (Celebrex) in a large, national Alzheimer's disease prevention trial sponsored by the NIH's **National Institute on Aging**.