

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Survey & Clinical News to Use

AAHSA-compiled stats help you read between the lines for Medicare initiatives. For one, the numbers reveal the staggering price tag for nursing home care, which explains the government's growing interest in moving more functional individuals out of such settings. "More than 1.5 million people reside in U.S. nursing homes, at a cost of more than \$120 billion per year," notes the American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging compilation, citing "Advancing Nursing Home Quality Through Quality Improvement Itself," Rachel M. Werner & R. Tamara Konetzka, Health Affairs, January 2010, vol. 29, page 81.

The stats also help explain the federal government's growing focus on finding ways to rein in rehospitalization for post-acute patients. Rehospitalization rates for SNF patients jumped by 29 percent from 2000-2006, the AAHSA report notes. "By 2006, more than one-fifth (23.5 percent) of all hospital discharges to a skilled nursing facility returned directly to the hospital, at a total cost of \$4.34 billion per year to the Medicare program. ("The Revolving Door of Rehospitalization From Skilled Nursing Facilities," Vincent Mor, Orna Intrator, Zhanlian Feng & David Grabowski, Health Affairs, January 2010, vol. 29, page 62)."

Doing a sleep assessment might uncover whether residents have a potential risk factor for stroke. A major study has linked obstructive sleep apnea to a heightened stroke risk for middle-aged and older adults, according to a release from the National Institutes of Health's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, which supported the study. "Overall, sleep apnea more than doubles the risk of stroke in men," states the release. The risk occurs separate of known stroke risk factors, including hypertension and diabetes. The study also found for the first time an association between sleep apnea and stroke risk in women, although the risk is less than it is for men.

"This is the largest study to date to link sleep apnea with an increased risk of stroke. The time is right for researchers to study whether treating sleep apnea could prevent or delay stroke in some individuals," says **Susan B Shurin, MD**, acting director of the NHLBI, in the release.