

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Survey Enforcement: SURVEYORS PREPARE FOR NEW SOM INSTRUCTIONS

Heads up, nursing homes: The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** is busy updating Chapter 7 of the State Operations Manual, and facilities - and surveyors - can expect a few changes in the upcoming year.

That's according to **Anne Hall**, assistant regional counsel for the **Department of Health and Human Services**. Hall, who spoke at the **American Health Lawyers Association's** recent Long-Term Care and the Law conference, said that her predictions didn't reflect HHS official policy. Still, her outline provided some idea of what facilities should keep an eye out for in upcoming months.

CMS' proposed revisions to Chapter 7 will contain no new policies, Hall related. But the revisions will incorporate all guidance, including Q&As, issued since its last update; additional processing details dealing with complaints; and a new section on self-reported incidents.

References to the **Health Care Financing Administration** will be updated to reflect the agency's name change.

Chapter 7 will also incorporate CMS' revisit policy, issued May 2001. The guidance, which dictates how CMS and state officials can verify a return to compliance after violations have been found, allows remedies to be stopped with an onsite revisit, Hall explained.