

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

What Do You Think?

Here's the answer to last month's question: Should a facility that's doing bad quality assurance -- for example, not implementing its corrective actions or allowing the same problem to recur time after time -- be required to turn over its QA materials to surveyors?

Answer: The State Operations Manual does not differentiate between whether surveyors can review QA materials based on whether a facility has an effective versus non-effective QA process, says **Kendall Watkins**, attorney with **Davis Brown Koehn Shors & Roberts, PC**, in Des Moines, IA. "It's best to have the broad protection of QA materials to encourage facilities to do the kind of root-cause analysis where providers can internally self-criticize their performance," he says. "Physicians and other healthcare providers also need an environment where they feel free to speak up when a colleague isn't meeting the standard of care. And that's more likely to happen if physicians know their critiques or comments aren't going to be made public or go to survey agencies."