

MDS Alert

Boost Your Flu And Pneumonia Immunization Rates Now

Heads up: A publicly reported quality measure looking at flu and pneumonia immunizations may be on its way, so ask residents to roll up their sleeves now rather than later.

"The immunization measure is still being worked out," says **David Gifford, MD, MPH**, chief medical officer with the Rhode Island quality improvement organization. The debate about moving ahead with the measure has to do with whether the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** should use OSCAR data or claims information for the measure - or wait for implementation of the MDS 3.0, which will likely contain items about the resident's immunizations, according to a CMS official speaking at the agency's Nov. 18 SNF open forum.

In the meantime, "nursing facilities should increase their residents' flu and pneumonia immunization rates to as close to 100 percent as possible," Gifford advises. "Pneumonia is one of the leading causes of mortality and hospitalization for nursing home residents," he stresses. Flu and pneumonia can also lead to outcomes that will trigger other quality indicators and measures.