MDS Alert

Clip 'N Save: In The Market For MDS Software?

Ask these questions now to prevent fiscal and clinical headaches later.

Software purchases can catapult your facility into a new echelon of clinical, operational and payment efficiency - or come back to haunt you in major ways.

Ask these questions before you sign the dotted line or put your bottom line at risk, suggests **Jennifer Boring RN, BA**, corporate manager of clinical systems for **RH Positive Computer Systems** in Columbus, OH.

1. What is the cost and what does that include?
2. What are the purchase terms?
3. What guarantees are included?
4. What are the minimum system requirements?
5. Can we install it? If not, what's the cost to install it?
6. What's the cost/type of product support?
7. What are the type of product enhancements and their cost?
8. What are the options for training and related costs?
9. What's the availability of phone support - and the cost?
10. What is the average help-desk resolution time?

Don't Forget This Critical Question: Does the software force you to change an MDS system that works for you? "If you like the facility's MDS process - and it works well for the facility - choose a software product that supports that system," suggests **Nathan Lake, RN, BSN, MSHA**, a Seattle-based software developer for **Compudata Health Corporation**. "Don't try to adjust your process to accommodate the software," he advises.

Also make sure you understand the system's bells and whistles and determine whether those really work - and if they will enhance rather than detract from your MDS system.

Key Advice: "Once you've answered all of your questions, research your choices and request demonstrations and references for the product," Boring advises.