Codify

MDS Alert

Data Management: Using Hand-Held Computerized Devices Can Capture Therapy Minutes Accurately

With this system, no one can accuse a SNF of rounding up Part A minutes.

Losing track of the exact number of therapy minutes can be an expensive proposition under the SNF PPS. Undercode minutes and you lose your rightful reimbursement -- overcode and risk a payment recoupment or worse.

Option: To nail down therapy sessions to the minute, Peoplefirst therapists use a personal digital assistant (PDA) where they touch a button each time a therapy session begins and ends, reports **David T ate,** a physical therapist and senior director of client relations with Peoplefirst Rehabilitation in Louisville, Ky. The PDA automatically "time stamps" the start and end times for the sessions.

"We don't want therapists recording 7:30 when they started [a session] at 7:32," says Tate. "And using the PDAs in real-time improves the therapists' ability to accurately capture the times rather than waiting until the end of the day to record this important information."

Surprise: You might think that recording treatment times at day's end would result in overestimating therapy minutes. But CMS' STRIVE study found that therapists who followed that practice underestimated the time spent with each patient, Tate cautions. The PDAs use proprietary software called Point of Care that also allows a therapist to select patients to be treated and the appropriate HCPCS codes for the sessions basedon treatments provided, says Tate.