

MDS Alert

Documentation Tip: Clean Up Your Care Plan Problem List

Consider using the SOAP approach.

Looking for a way to stay on top of each resident's problem list? One option is to use a problem-oriented record where you number the problems and document using a SOAP format to address each problem.

SOAP stands for Subjective data where you record what the patient or family member communicates, Objective data (what you see, touch, hear, smell, measure, etc.), Assessment or analysis of the data, and the Plan to address the problem. "As a problem resolves, you cross it off and add new ones as they evolve," says **Carol Job, RN**, a consultant with **Myers & Stauffer** in Topeka, KS. "By using that approach, everyone can quickly see what a resident's active problems are, what's resolved, what's new," says Job.

Another perk: "The SOAP method forces you to do some critical thinking [because] you have to analyze the information gathered," observes **Joy Morrow, RN, PhD**, a consultant with **Hansen, Hunter & Co.**, Beaverton, OR.