

## MDS Alert

### Hiring: 3 Tips Help You Choose the Most Effective MDS Nurse Candidate

#### Give the potential new hire a mock sample QI/QM report.

Hiring an MDS nurse is an expensive proposition that your team shouldn't leave to chance. These approaches can reveal who is most likely to succeed in a demanding job.

**1. Find out how the person perceives the job and what she or he expects from it.** Some nurses who are tired of working the floor may perceive the MDS nurse position is an office job that won't be stressful. Therefore, you should ask nurses applying for the MDS nurse role if they like paperwork, how they deal with stress -- and how they manage working with a diverse team.

**Key point:** The MDS person has to be very willing to work with all shifts and all the different disciplines, including direct-care staff.

**2. Assess the candidate's critical thinking skills.** One way to do that is to devise an exercise that requires a person to use critical thinking.

**Example:** Give a job applicant a mock sample QI/QM report and resident roster with fake names. Then, have the person review a mock-up chart to identify documentation that supports the MDS coding for a specific QI/QM, such as falls or pressure ulcers, she advises. (If the person is already a nurse working with residents in the facility, you can use an actual QI/QM report and chart.)

Also give the person the RAI user's manual and the technical specifications and information on the QIs/QMs. Even if the person isn't familiar with the RAI process, he or she should be able to read the materials and definitions and think it through.

**3. Try to identify how much "baggage," in terms of misinformation and myths, the person has about the MDS,** suggests **Marilyn Mines, RN, BSN, RAC-CT, BC,** senior manager of clinical services for FR&R Healthcare Consulting in Deerfield, Ill. That's important to do, she says, because dissuading a person that his or her coding myths are wrong can be difficult, in Mines' experience.