

MDS Alert

If RAC Auditors Come Knocking, Stand Your Ground

Don't be waylaid by demands for records.

You come in Monday morning and find RAC auditors waiting in the lobby. Now what?

Start by avoiding the mistakes some SNFs made in the RAC demo in which auditors did sometimes show up onsite. "In the demo, providers reported feeling intimidated by the auditors and feeling they had to provide everything immediately, which probably led to some payment recoupments," cautions **Betsy Anderson**, VP at FR&R Healthcare Consulting in Deerfield, Ill.

The reality: "You don't want the RAC auditors to hand-pick what they want to review," counsels **Elizabeth Malzahn**, manager at FR&R. "That's not how the process is set up."

Instead: Thank the RAC auditors for coming by, "give them a quick tour of the building, if you want, and then ask them to send you their request [for records] in writing," she says.

That way, you'll have 45 days to reply, Anderson adds. "The SNF should have a complete record of what it sent the RAC contractor in order to have control over the process."