

## MDS Alert

### MDS 3.0: The Countdown Continues: CMS Hits Milestone for Achieving Oct. 1, 2010 Rollout

Find out what instructions to expect when.

The final MDS 3.0 debuted on Oct. 29, although without the instructions. But don't worry -- CMS says all of the RAI User's Manual will be out by year's end.

"CMS was committed to publishing the MDS 3.0 item set, the data specs, and the RAI User's Manual by the end of October -- they succeeded with two out of three," says **Rena Shephard, MHA, RN, RAC-MT, C-NE**, founding board chair and executive editor for the American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordinators, and president of RRS Healthcare Consulting Services in San Diego. "It was critical for the software vendors to get the data specs," which they did, adds Shephard. The MDS 3.0 is scheduled to go into effect on Oct. 1, 2010.

CMS anticipates publishing chapters one, two, three, five, and six of the RAI manual in November, but hadn't done so near press time on Nov. 21. "Chapter 4 (Care Area Assessments (CAAs) & Appendix C (CAA resources) will be posted in December," notes CMS on its Web site, which contains the files for downloading: [www.cms.hhs.gov/NursingHomeQualityInits/25\\_NHQIMDS30.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NursingHomeQualityInits/25_NHQIMDS30.asp).

The published manual will include a description and instructions for the following, according to CMS:

- the types of assessments and tracking documents;
- each MDS 3.0 item;
- the Care Area Assessment;
- Submission and correction of MDS 3.0 records;
- Skilled nursing facility and swing-bed Prospective Payment System (SNF PPS) policy for the MDS 3.0, and the RUG-IV classification system.

Vendors were eagerly awaiting the data specs in order to meet the rapidly approaching rollout date for the MDS 3.0. "It was critical for the software vendors to get the data specs," emphasizes Shephard.

"Software vendors have most of what they need to start basic fundamental programming of MDS 3.0," says **Peter Arbuthnot**, regulatory analyst for American HealthTech in Jackson, Miss. That includes "entry screens, printing, and submission of all the various types of MDS 3.0 forms (annual, quarterly, PPS, tracking, etc)."