

MDS Alert

MDS & BILLING NEWS

Good news for Part B rehab patients: The therapy exceptions process will remain in place through 2007.

President Bush has signed into law The Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006, which includes a provision extending the exceptions to limits on Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy for patients requiring more intensive rehab. Thus, the "existing exceptions process will remain in place for another year," says **Barbara Gay**, a spokesperson for the **American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging**. The exceptions process, which CMS implemented in March 2006, has worked well, Gay tells **Eli**. She believes it "seems to meet the congressional intent of addressing over utilization while also ensuring that beneficiaries who have had strokes and hip replacements, etc., get the rehabilitation therapy they need." **Check out this transmittal: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid** transmittal 1145, released on Dec. 29, 2006, puts an end to the manual exceptions process. Now, all exceptions are automatic. This makes the exceptions process a little smoother for both CMS and providers. But be certain you continue to keep thorough supporting documentation for those patients who exceed the caps. You'll need to be able to demonstrate that they have good reason to need additional therapy. (Read the transmittal at

www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/downloads/R1145CP.pdf.) **Does your print version of the RAI manual contain this inaccuracy?** CMS has become aware that "several commercial publishers have printed RAI User's Manuals for MDS Version 2.0 with misinformation regarding: Section G, chapter 3, page 83," the agency states in a recent notice. CMS says the incorrect RAI manual version appears to include draft May 2005 revisions rescinded shortly after their release. The agency subsequently issued a revised June 2005 version of the update. **The real deal:** For the official RAI User's Manual for MDS 2.0, go to www.cms.hhs.gov/NursingHomeQualityInits/20_NHQIMDS20.asp.