

MDS Alert

MDS Coding: 4 Helpful Clarifications To MDS Coding Instructions

The April 2004 RAI user's manual update contains some language changes that clarify a number of common areas of confusion among facilities. These include the following:

1. Include the assessment reference date in the lookback (observation period). That's always been the case, but the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** has again clarified the issue. **Tip:** Make sure you're using the correct lookback period for the item being coded. (p. 3-29)
2. Don't include topical preparations used for preventive skin care (moisturizers and moisture barriers) in Section 01 (number of medications). Antigens and vaccines are counted in coding this section. (p. 3-176)
3. Code for the frequency of pain during the observation period at J2a. Code the highest intensity of pain at J2b. (p. 3-141)
4. When the RN assessment coordinator worked on the Background (Face Sheet) Information at Admission, he/she must enter his/her signature on the date it is complete. (p. 3-27)