MDS Alert

MDS Technology: Does A High-Tech MDS System Really Produce High-Revenue Returns?

Technology can be a boon when it comes to getting the most out of the MDS process, but it has also been known to cause serious cases of sticker shock.

For example, without **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services'** grant money, a 100-bed nursing facility purchasing a OneTouch System would spend $26,000 on hardware and $33,000 on training, which are one-time costs. "And the software and support is about $32,000 a year," reports **Robert Davis**, president of **OneTouch Technologies** in Irvine, CA, which is the vendor for a CMS-funded study looking at the impact of the technology on nursing home care and efficiency. (For details of what the high-tech integrated MDS and electronic medical record system can do, see the story "In the Spotlight".)

OneTouch calculates the cash return on that investment to run between six and 10 times the cost of the system per month, although the actual amount depends on a number of factors, including whether the facility is in a Medicaid case-mix state, Davis says. The return on the investment not only comes from enhanced RUGs revenues, but also from the availability of "survey ready" documentation at all times. "And the system takes the drudgery out of doing the MDS," Davis adds.

The million-dollar question, of course, is whether CMS will support high-tech systems if the agency finds that they do indeed promote better patient care, accurate reimbursement and provider efficiency. "That remains to be seen, but we are certainly talking to CMS and other government agencies about the government supporting technology in that way," Davis says. "Use of such technology will pay off not only for facilities but also for public payers of health care," he says.