

## MDS Alert

### MEDICARE: Keep Your Payment and Compliance on Track With Your New MAC

Use this handy checklist to ensure a smooth changeover.

The transition to MACs doesn't have to add up to serious cash flow woes and other headaches, if you follow a few key pointers.

Step 1: Get the date that the transition to the Medicare Administrative Contractor will take place, if your SNF hasn't already made the change, advises **Cindy Dunne**, with ECS Billing & Consulting Inc. in Dublin, Ohio. Also "find out if there will be any changes in the direct data entry Medicare online system, such as changes in usernames or passwords," Dunne counsels. And ask the MAC how it conducts medical review.

Also include these items on your to-do list before and during the transition to the MAC:

2. Update your information. "The SNF should update its information with its MAC once assigned -- for example, the address for sending the credit balance report" and so forth, suggests **Elizabeth Malzahn**, manager for FR&R Healthcare Consulting in Deerfield, Ill.

Tip: "Also make sure the MAC has the correct contact information for the individual providers in the facility," adds **Betsy Anderson**, VP at FR&R Healthcare in Deerfield. Facilities are sometimes remiss in doing this when they have changes in administrators and other key people, Anderson notes.

3. Check to see if your NPI number is correct, advises **Cindy MacQuarrie, RN, MSN**, managing consultant at BKD LLP in Kansas City, Mo.

"We worked with one provider who actually found an inconsistency with their name and NPI number in the system," she reports. "That [problem] needed to be corrected before the MAC would accept any claims. [And] it took a while for the SNF to figure out -- they didn't know what was wrong except that they just kept getting claims rejected," MacQuarrie relays.

Good idea: Monitor all your remittance advices to make sure everything is coming through, suggests Anderson.

4. Get up to speed with education. "The MACs have had quite a number of educational sessions and will continue this moving forward," says MacQuarrie.

"They are trying to get everyone on the same page from a clinical and billing standpoint," she adds.

Some of the sessions are free, MacQuarrie notes, and are available through Webcasts and at training sites throughout the areas served by the MAC.