

MDS Alert

MEDICARE, SURVEY & CLINICAL NEWS TO USE

Worried That Lack of Bona Fide 3-Day Hospital Stays Could Pull the RUGs Out From Under Your SNF? CMS official **Sheila Lambowitz** recently offered some reassuring news on that issue. Hospitals have been notified that they can't change billing for an inpatient stay to an observation stay after the fact, Lambowitz reported during the March 2010 SNF/LTC Open Door Forum. Reports have indicated that some hospitals have been doing that, which leaves the SNF in the lurch because then a resident no longer has a qualifying three-day inpatient hospital stay (see MDS Alert. Vol. 7, No. 13, page 150).

The QI/QM Blackout May Last Longer Than You Think. In the March 2010 SNF/LTC Open Door Forum, CMS' **Karen Shoeneman** said the MDS-generated QI/QM reports won't be available to surveyors or providers for approximately a year once the MDS 3.0 rolls out. Shoeneman also relayed that she had been told that the QI/QM reports would continue to be available through September 2010 as there's no reason to take them down ahead of time (the MDS 3.0 rolls out on Oct. 1). Shoeneman said that if that information proves to be wrong, she will let people know on a future ODF call.

Check In With Your Patient's Fear Factor Before Starting Rehab Therapy. Fear can take its toll on rehab patients' outcomes. And researchers found that using the Fear-Avoidance Beliefs Questionnaire (FABQ) at intake could identify elevated levels of fear-avoidance beliefs in patients who were receiving outpatient rehab, according to a press release from the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). The FABQ, a short, self-report questionnaire, assesses pain-related fear in patients with various neuromusculoskeletal conditions.

"Therapists do not routinely screen for elevated levels of fear in patients, although evidence suggests that identifying fear-avoidance beliefs and managing those beliefs accordingly may reduce fear and help to predict or improve outcomes," said **Dennis L. Hart, PT, PhD**, researcher and director of consulting and research at Focus On Therapeutic Outcomes Inc. in White Stone, Va., in the release.

How: Test results indicating elevated levels of fear could point to patients' fear of activities that are part of their therapeutic interventions. Then, the therapist could adjust accordingly for better outcomes.