

## MDS Alert

### Pressure Ulcer Staging Tip: When A Decubitus Ulcer Codes Much Better Than It Looks ....

**Picture this:** You're doing a skin assessment to code the MDS and observe that the resident has a large area of discolored and obvious deep pressure-induced tissue damage, and it's doubtful any therapy will prevent a stage 3 or 4 ulcer from developing in a few days. But at the moment, the overlying skin is intact. Would you still code a stage 1 pressure ulcer?

The short answer: Yes. "The current recommendation is to code it as a stage 1 using the MDS coding system, said **Daniel Berlowitz, MD**, president of the **National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (NPUAP)**, at an Aug. 3 **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services'** webcast on pressure ulcer care. Berlowitz noted that the NPUAP is having discussions about the issue of deep-tissue damage with intact skin.

To see a picture of the type of wound Berlowitz is talking about, view the archived Aug. 3 program on pressure ulcers at <http://cms.internetstreaming.com>.