

## MDS Alert

### Reader Question: Flu Season Different for Different Places

**Question:** I'm still in my first year of doing MDS. When residents are admitted outside of flu season, how do I code the MDS question about the flu shot?

Louisiana Subscriber

**Answer:** Regardless of whether an incoming resident has had a flu shot during this year's flu season, MDS item O0250 (Influenza Vaccine) can be tricky for nurse assessment coordinators (NACs).

The MDS specifies in O0250A that the NAC should focus on the subitem's description "in this facility," regarding the influenza vaccine. So, if the resident is admitted outside of flu season, you know to code 0 No for O0250, with the instruction to skip O0250B, which requires the date of vaccination. Once you reach O0250C, code 1 Resident not in this facility during this year's influenza vaccination season. (See MDS question, on following page.)

The traditional "flu season" is often described as the beginning of October through the end of March, but did you know that flu season can vary from state to state or even from county to county? Therefore, it's important to check in with your local health department to see how long the flu season is in your specific area. In fact, one flu-related death was reported in week 24 of the 2018-2019 flu season, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

