

## MDS Alert

### Section B: Say What? 3 Quick Tips To Properly Assess Hearing

#### Why the presence or absence of a hearing aid is so important.

Section B: Hearing, Speech, and Vision is a virtual cornerstone to your resident's MDS assessment. And evaluating residents' hearing ability may seem easier than it really is. Here are three tips to help you avoid tripping yourself up on certain elements of Sections B0200 and B0300.

#### Tip #1: Begin with the Basics

The first thing you should do is to understand whether the resident uses a hearing aid or other appliance before you begin the assessment, according to **Debra Saliba, MD, MPH**, director of the **UCLA/Jewish Home Borun Center for Gerontological Research**, in a **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)** instructional session. "Always attempt to talk to the resident to make a determination."

Also, you should observe the resident in various situations □ while participating in social activities, when watching television, and when interacting with family and friends, Saliba instructed. "And consult with family, significant others and staff."

#### Tip #2: Ask About Hearing Aids

Don't assume that just because the resident isn't wearing a hearing aid at the time of the interview that he simply doesn't have one. Ask the resident if he has a hearing aid or "if the hearing aid is with them in the facility, because oftentimes it's not," noted Saliba.

"We had one patient whose family refused to leave their hearing aid in the nursing home because they were afraid it would get lost," Saliba related. "So, they would bring it the one day a week they visited, and that was the only time anyone could communicate with the patient."

So be sure to find out if the resident has a hearing aid, whether it's in the facility, and whether the batteries are working and it's operational.

#### Tip #3: Go Beyond the Coding

When you're coding B0300: Hearing Aid, think about the resident's ability to hear while using a hearing aid, Saliba said. "The reason this is important is because if they have limited hearing with their hearing appliance in place, then we should be asking ourselves 'Is the hearing appliance functioning properly? Does the hearing appliance need to be reassessed?'"

"If they don't have a hearing assistive device in place, then we should be asking ourselves 'Would they potentially

benefit from that appliance?" Saliba stated.