

OASIS Alert

Assessment: TRANSFER v. DISCHARGE: DO YOU KNOW THE RULES OF THE GAME?

It's easy to become confused in the "what if" world of OASIS assessments, and the issue of when to complete a transfer versus a discharge OASIS is no exception.

The good news is that making this call really can be quite painless, if you remember a few simple rules, experts tell **Eli**.

Here's a scenario home health agencies commonly encounter: A patient with diabetes has a mild stroke and goes into an inpatient rehab facility for a couple of weeks, but the agency expects her still to require home care afterward, offers consultant **Terri Ayer** with **Ayer Associates** in Annandale, VA. In this case, you'd complete a transfer of care OASIS because you expect the patient will return to home care, she instructs.

In fact, whenever a patient goes to a skilled nursing facility, a rehab facility or a hospital, the agency should complete a transfer OASIS, continues Chapel Hill, NC-based consultant **Judy Adams** with **Larson Allen Health Group**.

When completing the transfer OASIS, agencies should indicate whether the patient will be discharged with the transfer, Adams reminds providers. "If the HHA expects the patient to return to home health services, they should mark 'transfer, not discharged from the agency,'" she explains. "If they believe the patient will be permanently placed in another level of care and not return to home health, they should indicate 'transfer to an inpatient facility, patient discharged from agency.'"

Adams offers the following answers to other common "what if" scenarios agencies encounter:

1. If the agency completes a transfer OASIS, patient not discharged from the agency, and the patient does not return to the HHA, there is no requirement to do any further OASIS assessment. The agency simply would complete its own discharge summary.
2. If the agency marks the transfer OASIS with the patient being discharged but then the patient returns to home care within the 60-day episode, the HHA can correct the previous OASIS and complete a resumption of care assessment.
3. If the patient returns to the agency after the 60-day episode, the agency completes a new start of care OASIS and begins a new episode.

Agencies should complete a discharge OASIS when the patient is discharged to the community, which could include "another home health agency, a hospice program or because the patient meets one of the agency's criteria for discharge (i.e., goals are met)," Adams advises.

You should never find yourself completing a transfer of care and a discharge OASIS assessment.

Think of the beginning and end of an OASIS episode as though it were a light switch, Adams suggests. "The OASIS light is turned on, or the episode begins, with the SOC or ROC OASIS. The OASIS light is turned off, or the episode ends, with a transfer, discharge or death at home OASIS assessment. Just as you turn a light switch on or off by moving it one way, only one assessment is needed at the start and one at the end of an OASIS episode."

