

OASIS Alert

Education: DON'T TAKE A HIT ON VACCINE ADMINISTRATION

You don't have to physically possess vaccines to get credit for them.

Many states forbid you from transporting medications such as vaccines. Yet two OASIS C process measures ask you specifically whether you provided immunizations to your patients. Heed this expert advice to work around this catch-22.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** didn't intend for items M1040 (influenza vaccine) and M1050 (pneumococcal vaccine) to hinge on your arriving for a patient visit with vaccines in hand. Administering a vaccine -- no matter who brought it to the patient encounter -- qualifies you to complete those items, the agency states in a January 2010 clarification on the **OASIS Certificate and Competency Board** (OCCB) Web site.

Better: You don't have to stop there. Use your knowledge and experience to help patients and their family members obtain the vaccines you need to administer. Facilitating the vaccine pickup allows you to complete process items M1045 and M1055, which ask for the reasons why your agency did not provide the vaccine.

You might also run into situations where patients don't see the value or urgency in receiving a vaccination. Your commitment to educating them about the importance of being vaccinated and providing information on where to obtain a vaccination -- even through community channels, like a free clinic -- will help you claim those measures, points out **Karen Vance**, supervising consultant with **BKD** in Colorado Springs.

Bottom line: Think of it like staff members helping a family procure and install a piece of equipment, Vance recommends. Taking similar steps to educate and encourage immunizations will ensure your assessment shows that you are invested in protecting your patients against preventable viruses and diseases.

Note: You can read the OCCB's clarification at www.oasiscertificate.org. Select "Resources" from the menu on the left. For more information on vaccines, see "Don't Be Thrown By What 'Flu Season' Means In OASIS C" in OASIS Alert Volume 10, Number 1.