

OASIS Alert

Education: WHEN DO TWO STASIS ULCERS BECOME ONE?

Accurate records can save the day on M0470.

Question: The patient has a large venous stasis ulcer that includes two dark areas in the middle. Do you count this as one wound or two?

Answer: "If areas of venous stasis ulceration are contiguous and developed at the same time, the entire area would be counted as one stasis ulcer," the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** clarifies in response to a question from the **National Association for Home Care & Hospice**. But if two venous stasis ulcers developed at different times and eventually the wound margins came together, you would count these as two ulcers, "as long as it remains possible to differentiate one ulcer from another based on wound margins," CMS says.

Bottom line: It may be difficult to know whether the ulcer developed as one or two areas, CMS points out. "It would be up to the assessing clinician to determine the number of stasis ulcers in situations where multiple stasis ulcers may have merged," CMS instructs.