

## OASIS Alert

### News You Can Use: OASIS May Finally Become Part Of COPs

Home health agencies might actually see the new conditions of participation before the next list of coding changes.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** published its upcoming regulatory plans in the Dec. 22, 2003 Federal Register. Once again, CMS has placed new home health conditions of participation on the agenda, this time setting a final rule date of June. The agency has delayed publishing new home health COPs for years as other changes have taken priority, but a CMS official in the December home health Open Door Forum expressed renewed dedication to getting the COPs out without further extensions.

CMS seeks to add reporting of OASIS data to the COPs in the next six months, according to the agenda. The current OASIS requirements are based on an interim final rule published in January 1999.

Because the COPs are written and in the regulatory clearance process, "there is certainly no reason why they could not get out in time," notes **Bob Wardwell** with the **Visiting Nurse Associations of America**.

But due to new burdens put on CMS by the recently enacted Medicare legislation, changes in top-level staff at the agency and other pressures, "there is no way to know if it will again be sidetracked," Wardwell tells **Eli**.

(CMS' regulatory agenda, under the **Health and Human Services Department**, is at [www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fedreg/a031222c.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a031222c.html).)

1. **Check your new outcome data on Home Health Compare**, following the first quarterly update of the public comparison site. To see your numbers, go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), then click on Home Health Compare. Errors in demographic data will be corrected monthly and new outcome data added quarterly, CMS says.
2. **Providers can say goodbye to local medical review policies (LMRPs)** and hello to local coverage determinations (LCDs). Starting last month, contractors began issuing LCDs instead of LMRPs, and launched the two-year process of converting existing LMRPs to LCDs and related articles, according to a notice on regional home health intermediary **Cahaba GBA's** Web site.