

OASIS Alert

OASIS News: Find Answers To Your OASIS Questions All In One Place

The answers you've been looking for are back.

A valuable resource is ready to download.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** had removed most of the OASIS questions and answers from the OASIS Web site last year. The agency put them on another Web site, because it wanted only "really hot" Q&As on the main site, reported **Mary Weakland** at the Aug. 24 Home Health, Hospice and DME Open Door Forum. But agencies said they wanted to look back at all the Q&As.

CMS has arranged with its OASIS contractor, the **Iowa Foundation for Medical Care**, to make the more than 380 Q&As available on its Web site at www.qtso.com/hhdownload.html. At the bottom of the Web page you'll find the Q&As "for your reading pleasure," Weakland noted. The Q&As are in categories "like we used to have" and new ones will be added, she reported. HHAs can even download the Q&As and put them in a manual for quick access, she suggested.

1. **Recent changes to the OASIS** Considerations for Medicare PPS Patients take effect Oct. 1, Weakland also reminded providers in the forum. The August changes affect OASIS assessments for patients who were hospitalized during the last five days of an episode and where an agency wants to claim a significant change in condition, she announced.

Instead of two assessments - one to close an episode and one to open the next episode - as of Oct. 1 HHAs will need to complete only the resumption of care assessment to project the therapy needs for the next episode. An explanation of these changes is at www.cms.hhs.gov/oasis/42304ho6.pdf.

2. **If you were finding it difficult to respond** to Comprehensive Error Rate Testing letters in 45 days, you'll be relieved to see the new 90-day requirement on letters from CERT Contractor **AdvanceMed** for report dates after Jun 20. The 90-day countdown begins on the report date noted in the top right hand corner of your letter, an Advance Med spokesperson tells **Eli**.
3. **Just because CMS has given** the OK for physician rubber signature stamps doesn't mean it's kosher in your state. Texas is not accepting doc signature stamps, **Heather Vasek** of the **Texas Association for Home Care** reported in the July Home Health Open Door Forum.

If states have more restrictive rules on rubber stamps, they don't have to accept them, CMS made clear in its survey and certification letter and at the forum. But confused HHAs in Texas and other states with similar rules may use stamped signatures without realizing that, Vasek worried.

Agencies also are required to obtain statements from physicians attesting that only they use the stamps. Such a rule defeats the purpose of making documentation easier for the HHA and physician by having the physician's staff use the stamp, experts contend.