

## OASIS Alert

### OASIS Time Points: Does Your SCIC Policy Need a Check-Up?

**Neglect this Condition of Participation and risk survey sanctions.**

If you're not doing a new assessment when your patient has a significant change in his condition, you could be risking survey citations. Make sure you know when  and when not to  complete a SCIC assessment.

**Myth:** When home health agencies were first required to complete OASIS assessments, some nurses thought they needed to complete a SCIC every time a patient had a medication change, said **Arlene Maxim, RN** founder of **A.D. Maxim Consulting, A.D. Maxim Seminars, and The National Coding Center**, in Troy, Mich. That's not the case, but neither is the opposite extreme of never completing a SCIC, she said during the **Eli**-sponsored audioconference "Rules of Engagement: Getting Back to Basics  Conditions of Participation, Part II."

Since the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** has eliminated the financial ramifications of SCICs, agencies may have let their "other follow-up" processes go by the wayside. You should complete an RFA 5  Other Follow-Up assessment when your patient has a major change (improvement or deterioration) you didn't expect, Maxim said. "If a patient changes to a point where the plan of care needs to change, you should do a SCIC."

**For example:** Your nurse has been seeing a patient for two to three weeks when suddenly he starts having joint pain and needs to have physical therapy added to his POC. This is a situation when you should complete a SCIC assessment, Maxim said.

**Another example:** Your patient's pressure ulcer has advanced from a Stage 2 to a Stage 3. It's time to complete a SCIC, Maxim said.

Having a documented policy that describes when your agency will complete SCIC assessments is a helpful audit safeguard. "Every surveyor will have their own vision of what a SCIC should be, but the thing that will protect agencies most is to have a policy that defines what they consider a SCIC," Maxim said. This way the agency isn't caught up in the surveyor's definition.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services'** rules are vague on this issue, Maxim said. So, make sure your policy is in compliance with the rules, but not in excess of the rules, she said.

**Bottom line:** If the patient improves or deteriorates in a way that your agency didn't envision at the start of care, you need to do a SCIC assessment.