

## OASIS Alert

### OASIS Update: BE ON GUARD FOR MORE SHIFTING SANDS SURROUNDING OASIS

The new OASIS data set may have received approval from the **Office of Management and Budget**, but it's still a work in progress.

That's one of the take-home messages from the annual OASIS Coordinators Conference, sponsored by the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** and held April 1 through 4 in New Orleans.

For example, CMS hasn't yet decided whether to continue requiring OASIS data for non-Medicare and non-Medicaid beneficiaries, a spokesperson announced. The agency still is trying to determine whether these data are necessary to the home health agency quality improvement project. If CMS decides the data are needed, agencies will have to continue collecting and transmitting them if not, CMS will give agencies a break on these patients. At present, though, it hangs in the balance.

Also, the home health technical expert panel at CMS continues to study ways to improve the OASIS instrument and reduce burden on agencies, another spokesperson told the group of approximately 600 conference attendees. These changes might be included in the new conditions of participation, which might be published this fall, the spokesperson said.

Scheduled for roll-out in October is the OASIS Web-based Training Program. CMS has been developing this program for two years as a basic educational tool about OASIS. The Web site is expected to contain 14 interactive training modules, and will also be available on CD-ROM.

On the technology front, CMS has posted the new HAVEN 6.1 patch to its Web site, and urges HHAs to download it immediately. This patch resolves bugs in version 6.0, and also is available as a full program for agencies currently using version 5.1. HAVEN 6.2 will be available Oct. 1, to accommodate the use of V codes, E codes and the new M0245.

CMS representatives emphasized that the goal of this conference was to teach providers, regional home health intermediary representatives, quality improvement organization representatives and OASIS coordinators in attendance about OASIS accuracy.

Last year saw an unusually high turnover in OASIS coordinators, making this year's conference all the more essential, one CMS spokesperson said. CMS attributes this turnover rate to massive retirements.