

OASIS Alert

Process Measures: IT'S FLU SEASON: TIME TO UPDATE YOUR VACCINE PROCEDURES

OASIS C will measure and report your vaccination rates.

The 2009-2010 flu season officially begins Oct. 4, according to the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC). Are you ready?

Vaccination rates will begin receiving new scrutiny as home health agencies tackle the new process measure in the OASIS C assessments. The focus in OASIS C is on seasonal flu vaccines and the pneumonia vaccine.

Priority Lists Differ for Seasonal and H1N1 Flu

While the flu season has started early this year in all 50 states, most of the cases so far are of the H1N1 variety (so-called swine flu), reports **Dr. Daniel Jernigan**, deputy director of the influenza division at the CDC.

The CDC recommends vaccines for the seasonal flu for those 50 years of age and over, and for others with some chronic diseases, as soon as the vaccines are ready. The seasonal fluvaccine is unlikely to protect against the H1N1 virus, the agency reports, and many will need additional vaccines. Unlike seasonal flu, though, H1N1 is more of a threat to children and young adults than it is to those over 65. So adults 25 to 64 with health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications are fifth on the list of priorities and those over 65 are last. Health care personnel should receive both vaccines, the CDC recommends.

Collect Information Before You Need to Answer OASIS C

OASIS C, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2010, asks agencies to respond to a dozen new process measures, including vaccination rates. But don't wait until January to start, says **Ann Rambusch** with **Rambusch3 Consulting** in Round Rock, Texas. It's not too early to prepare for the big change, she says (for more on developing an agency protocol, see page 100.)

M1040 (Influenza vaccine) asks if the patient received an influenza vaccine from your agency, for the current year's flu season, during this episode of care. Your answer choices are "No," "Yes," and "NA Does not apply because entire episode of care (SOC/ROC to Transfer/ DC) is outside this influenza season." For this OASIS question, CMS designates the influenza season as Oct. 1 through March 31. (For a sample form to assess a patient's need for immunization and provide follow up, see page 98.)

Problem: The clinician answers this question at either transfer or discharge, but the agency must collect this information at the start of the episode so the patient can be immunized if needed, says consultant **Judy Adams** with **Adams Home Care Consulting** in Chapel Hill, N.C. You need to identify if and when the patient received the vaccine. If the patient did not, you need to know if the patient is eligible for the vaccine, Adams explained to participants in a recent **Eli**-sponsored audio conference, "Home Health Boot Camp for New OASIS C Process Measures, Part 1".

Strategy: One tool could be to add this question to a letter you send to the patient's primary physician, along with other questions you may have about the patient's history. If the patient has not had the vaccine, you'll need to know if the doctor wants the agency to provide it. You'll need an order as well, Adams explained. Another idea is to add this question to the intake information so you have as much information as possible right away. Putting this information in an Excel spreadsheet would give you a record to consult now and later if the patient is readmitted, Adams suggested.

[Here's how to do it:](#) For an example of a spread sheet to track immunizations, go to