OASIS Alert

Reader Question: Faster Data Expectations Remain Unmet

Agencies are stuck with time lag one year later.

Question: We thought that once the OASIS data transmission was faster -- now that it has to be sent in no later than 30 days after the assessment -- we would see more current outcomes data from the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services**. But so far our agency has seen no improvement in the time lag between data submission and receipt of outcomes using that data. Are other agencies having the same experience?

Answer: In general home health agencies around the country are not receiving data any sooner, experts agree. The change was supposed to give agencies access to data sooner, but "this has not occurred," reports consultant **Pam Warmack** with **Clinic Connections** in Ruston, LA.

"Those involved in the national campaign are receiving some specific data sooner," says Director of Clinical Practice and Regulatory Affairs **Rachel Hammon** with the **Texas Association for Home Care**. But otherwise, agencies are seeing no change, she notes.

"Agencies are not receiving data any sooner," agrees consultant **Karen Vance** with **BKD** in Springfield, MO.

Unmet expectations: You're not the only ones who expected data to be available to agencies sooner. In the OASIS final rule published in the Federal Register Dec. 23, 2005, CMS explained: "Currently, OBQI/OBQM reports are available 2 months after submission of completed assessments. However, many HHAs are requesting that the OBQI/OBQM reports be more timely. Now that we are requiring HHAs to both encode and transmit completed OASIS data within 30 calendar days, we expect the reports to be available 30 days sooner."

Old way: Before the final rule took effect on June 21, 2006, agencies had a month to transmit following the month in which the data was locked. Although 75 percent of agencies transmitted data within 30 days of assessment completion, it could take as long as 60 days, CMS said. But while agencies have gotten faster, CMS has not, experts agree.