

OASIS Alert

Regulatory Reform: CMS BROADCASTS OASIS REDUCTIONS

If your clinicians are pulling out their hair over the length of current OASIS assessment forms, let them know that relief is on its way.

On Nov. 22, the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** conducted a 2.5-hour Webcast and satellite broadcast to discuss the proposed OASIS Burden Reduction data set. The broadcast was mandatory viewing for all regional office and state survey agency OASIS coordinators, as well as for surveyors and their supervisors.

Imminent changes to the OASIS data set should reduce its burden by over 25 percent, reports CMS. Assuming the **Office of Management & Budget** approves the proposed changes, home health agencies can begin applying the slimmed-down instrument to assessments completed on or after Dec. 16, 2002.

This Dec. 16 start date is an optional one, as HHAs "can continue to collect any items originally included in the OASIS data set," said **Mary Weak-land**, a CMS project manager for the national implementation of OASIS, during the broadcast. Agencies, however, must revise their forms by Oct. 1, 2003 to include proposed item M0245, which is intended to assist in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

"The new M0245 will allow HHAs to use V-codes at the existing M0230/M0240 items as part of the assignment of the appropriate diagnosis code using the ICD-9-CM coding process," states CMS in its handout materials.

The reduced form now called OASIS-B1 (12/2002) will feature changes that will allow HHAs to "create some efficiencies in their system by not doing things that are no longer required," states **Bob Wardwell**, vice president of regulatory and public affairs for the **Visiting Nurse Associations of America** and former CMS senior staffer.

In particular, Wardwell points to the reduced OASIS collection at the 60-day recertification as a good reason for HHAs to welcome these changes. Under the proposed burden reduction, the OASIS data set used at Reason for Assessment (RFA) 4 and RFA 5 "Recertification/Follow-up" and "Other Follow-Up" will require HHAs "to collect only those 23 items currently used to generate a payment group for a patient's subsequent episode of care," plus M0080, M0090 and M0100, reports CMS. "That's the biggest economy in this current series of reforms," Wardwell tells **Eli**.

Other changes and topics CMS discussed during the Nov. 22 broadcast include:

1. M0160 (Financial Factors), M0310 (Structural Barriers), M0320 (Safety Hazards), M0330 (Sanitation Hazards) and M0600 (Patient Behaviors) will be deleted from the OASIS assessment for all time points. HHAs can continue to submit these fields after Dec. 16, but the state won't store them.
2. A series of 18 items will be removed from the OASIS data set and placed on a Patient Tracking Sheet. The items will be collected and submitted at the start of care assessment and updated only as necessary. These items are M0010, M0012, M0014, M0016, M0020, M0030, M0032, M0040, M0050, M0060, M0063, M0064, M0065, M0066, M0069, M0072, M0140 and M0150.
3. RFA 2 and RFA 10 "Start of care with no further visits planned" and "Discharge, no further visits after the start of care" will no longer be required after Dec. 16.

4. Language will be added to M0460, M0476, M0488 and M0530 to direct clinicians through new skip patterns on the revised OASIS instrument.

5. New survey protocols have been issued to state surveyors which will focus on select adverse events and OBQI outcomes (see OASIS Alert, Vol. 3, No. 11, pp. 112-116).

6. A branch ID system "will be implemented nationally and will uniquely identify every branch of every HHA certified to participate in the Medicare home health program," directs CMS. The 10-character branch identifier will be entered on item M0016 of the Patient Tracking Sheet (see OASIS Alert, Vol. 3, No. 10, p. 102). Editor's Note: To see the draft of the OASIS-B1 (12/2002) Data Set, go to www.cms.hhs.gov/oasis/oasisdat.asp. To view a rebroadcast of the Nov. 22 conference, visit <http://cms.internetstreaming.com> or call (703) 605-6186 for more information.