

OASIS Alert

Survey & Certification: DONT DROP THE BALL WHEN YOU ADD A DISCIPLINE

If your home health agency forgets to complete a follow-up OASIS when you add another discipline to a patient's care, a surveyor just might throw some unpleasant discipline your way.

Most agencies consider adding a discipline, such as a physical therapist or home health aide, as indicative of a significant change in the patient's condition, notes Chapel Hill, NC-based consultant **Judy Adams**, with the **Larson Allen Health Group**. "If that's [the agency's] policy about a SCIC, then they're supposed to at that point reassess the patient, which means doing another OASIS," she explains.

Unfortunately, many agencies are dropping the ball at this point, reports consultant **Rose Kimball** with **Med-Care Administrative Services** in Dallas. The problem is particularly prevalent when an agency adds a home health aide, she tells **Eli**.

Kimball also frequently has encountered the problem in agencies that don't have physical therapists complete OASIS in these cases, the nurses often will forget to complete the follow-up assessment when the therapist is added, she notes. Granted, agencies do "have an opportunity to go back and fix it, but they're catching a state OASIS regulatory warning, and we want to minimize those," Kimball says.

Agencies that neglect to complete a follow-up OASIS assessment at one of the mandated time points are "out of compliance with a condition of participation so it's a survey and certification issue," warns Adams. Surveyors can slap HHAs that habitually forget to complete follow-up assessments with citations on the assessment/reassessment standard, she reminds providers.

Not only that, but if you miss out on the follow-up OASIS, you miss out on the added reimbursement you might stand to gain by claiming the SCIC. "If you're going to claim a SCIC you have to do [the follow-up]," counsels consultant **Lynda Laff** with Northbrook, IL-based **Laff Associates**. (For more information on when to claim a SCIC, see Eli's OASIS Alert, Vol. 3, No. 5, p. 56.)

Part of the reason agencies are forgetting to complete a follow-up assessment after adding a discipline is that many clinicians simply don't realize the financial impact it can have, suggests consultant **Laura Slataper** with Houston-based **Home Care Consulting**. HHAs should ensure that clinicians are "tuned into" issues that may increase payment, she urges. "Agencies finally are realizing the impact of OASIS and when and how to administer it."