

## OASIS Alert

### Therapy: INVITE THERAPISTS TO HOP ON THE OASIS BANDWAGON

If your home health agency routinely excuses physical therapists from OASIS duty, you are costing yourself a lot of time and money.

If an agency is fortunate enough to have physical therapists on staff as full- or part-time employees, "it is a very positive move" for the agency to train those therapists to conduct OASIS assessments, urges consultant **Pam Warmack** with **Clinic Connections** in Ruston, LA. "The opportunity to conduct quality training is too good to pass up."

Therapists often can assess a patient's functional abilities and potential for rehabilitation more thoroughly than a nurse can, so it only makes sense that the therapist completes OASIS in these cases, Warmack notes. "It is simply common sense to expect a clinician educated and trained in the science of rehabilitative therapy to capture more accurate, precise and valid assessment information as pertaining to their field of expertise," she continues. "To refuse to do the assessment is cheating the patient."

Also, having therapists complete OASIS assessments will eliminate the confusion that often surrounds a nurse completing the assessment for a patient receiving only physical therapy (see Eli's OASIS Alert, Vol. 3, No. 7, p. 78).

Plus, you'll save yourself money by not having to pay a nurse go make a special visit just to complete the OASIS assessment for a therapy-only patient, resulting in non-reimbursable expenses to the agency. "But the bigger flaw is that if the therapists are unwilling or unable to complete a comprehensive assessment, then no one is seeing a therapy only patient on a regular basis who is able to assess for ongoing or emerging needs," notes consultant **Linda Krulish** with **Home Therapy Services** in Redmond, WA. "I foresee this to eventually be an issue that will be identifiable on outcome reports," she continues.

Unfortunately, many therapists have heard so many horror stories about OASIS that they've been scared off and refuse to do it, Warmack says.

But in reality most of the OASIS items cover areas the therapist is looking at anyway, notes **Ann O'Sullivan**, family caregiver specialist with the **Agency on Aging** in Portland, ME and former rehab manager at a large visiting nurse association. "It is really a very functionally based tool, and therapists should feel very comfortable with what's on it," O'Sullivan posits.