

# Health Information Compliance Alert

## Industry News: Post-Acute Assessment Reform Demo Looking For You

Get a sneak peak at a tool that could reshape your patient evaluations.

A demonstration project that may result in a substitute for several important post-acute assessment instruments is looking for volunteers -- but there's a catch.

The **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** is testing patient assessment, outcomes and payment across the post-acute spectrum -- home health agencies, skilled nursing facilities, inpatient rehab facilities and long-term care hospitals. CMS has pilot tested the Continuity Assessment Record and Evaluation (CARE) tool in those providers already

Now CMS wants to conduct a full-fledged demonstration in early 2008, and the agency needs volunteers. But the 26-page assessment tool will be a major added burden to many health providers, experts fear.

Upside: Providers must only answer questions related to their services, says consultant **Judy Adams** with Charlotte, NC-based **LarsonAllen**.

CMS appears to recognize that it will have a hard sell with the demonstration. "Providers may ... be targeted for recruitment from analysis of Medicare administrative files and will be contacted," CMS says in a release about the project.

The agency and its contractor, **RTI International**, plan to conduct the demo in 10 "distinct" areas of the country. CMS and RTI will consider characteristics such as corporate ownership, profit status and size for participants.

Hidden benefit: Although the demo will be a paperwork burden for participants, it may end up benefiting the industry in the long run. "A key goal of this project is to generate recommendations for improving CMS payment models," CMS says in the release. Reform includes "aligning incentives among the four PAC settings."

Comments on this form are due by Sept. 25, Adams notes.

Resource: The form is at [www.cms.hhs.gov/PaperworkReductionActof1995/PRAL/list.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PaperworkReductionActof1995/PRAL/list.asp).