DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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CENTERS for MEDICARE & MEDICAID SERVICES

Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

Ref: S&C-04-40

DATE: **August 12, 2004**

TO: State Survey Agency Directors

FROM: Director
              Survey and Certification Group

SUBJECT: Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) Training Program

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Letter Summary

- A new RAI Training Program will assist State Survey Agencies (SAs), particularly RAI coordinators, with training providers.
- These materials are designed for use in conducting in-service training for nursing home staff in various sections of the RAI.
- Each training tool is based on national CMS policy to encourage consistent and accurate administration of the RAI nationally.
- Use of these materials is required for RAI Coordinators for training sessions this year.
- This letter includes a schedule of training products and release dates.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recognizes a need for training materials based on national policy and produced at a national level to assist with the administration of the RAI. The RAI collectively includes the Minimum Data Set (MDS), the Resident Assessment Protocols (RAPs), and the Utilization Guidelines also known as the RAI manual. CMS uses a train-the-trainer model. State RAI Coordinators, with guidance from CMS regional offices (ROs) and Central Office (CO), are tasked with training providers in their respective States. The State RAI Coordinators are federally funded positions within the State SAs.

The MDS is a comprehensive instrument that serves many masters, including: survey, quality, and payment. To that end, CMS is making a concerted effort to provide a suite of training tools designed to achieve consistent and accurate coding nationally. Since different people learn in different ways, these tools include a variety of media such as written and visual presentations, training videos, a prototypical medical record, internet-based training tools, a library of CMS approved training presentations on multiple topics, answers to questions, and RAI manual updates.

These training tools were largely developed based on pilot test results from the Data Verification and Accuracy (DAVE) reviews of real MDS forms in nursing homes. Analysis of the results of this process identified problematic coding areas of the MDS including Sections G, P, O, I, and J. CMS used these results as well as national policy to describe the correct coding of the MDS.

CMS believes that this core set of materials will be useful to the ROs and the RAI Coordinators in reducing the need to constantly develop new training materials, although additional materials may be necessary for some training efforts. Furthermore, the web-based lessons will be available on the Internet for any provider staff to access at any time. We will be announcing the web address through various means including our own web-site as the implementation date approaches. According to the FY 2005 Budget Call letter, each RAI Coordinator is required to conduct at least two training sessions for providers in their State using these materials in FY 2005.

The following is a schedule of release dates for the various training materials.

TYPE OF TRAINING	RELEASE DATE
Train-the-Trainer Packages on Sections G, P, O, I, and J	
-Power Point Presentations	Released on July 19, 2004
-Web-Ex Presentations of the Power Point Materials	Released on July 19, 2004
-A Sanitized Medical Record	Released on July 19, 2004
-Reconciliation Exercise for Section G	Released on July 19, 2004
-A Training Manual	Released on July 19, 2004
-Two Additional Training Programs	To Be Determined
Satellites: Improving MDS Accuracy Series	
-Activities of Daily Living and Restorative Nursing	August 27, 2004
-Infections, Medications, and Acute Diseases	October 29, 2004
-Skilled Services	January 28, 2005
Web-Based Lessons	
First Two Modules	Fall/Winter 2004
Remaining Modules	On-Going Through 2006
Library of Training Materials on CMS Website	Fall/Winter 2004
Questions and Answers	On-Going
RAI Manual Updates	On-Going

If you have any questions or comments about these resources, please contact Kirsten Jensen at 410-786-1095, or via email at kjensen@cms.hhs.gov or Rosemary Dunn at 410-786-1372, or via e-mail at rdunn@cms.hhs.gov.

Effective Date: Immediately. Please ensure distribution by August 31, 2004.

Training: This memorandum should be shared with SA and RO.

/s/
Thomas E. Hamilton