

Get Your ACTivities Together: New CMS Regulations in Long-Term Care

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Article:

Revised surveyor guidelines for ac- activities requirements in long-term care facilities became effective in June 2006. These guidelines have important programmatic, clinical, staff, and cost implications for gerontological nurses, administrators, and other facility staff. The investigative protocol used by surveyors is designed to determine whether a facility has provided a sufficient ongoing activities program that accommodates individual residents' interests and enhances their physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, according to each individual's comprehensive assessment. The protocol details procedures that should be used for each resident in the sample to determine the facility's compliance with the regulation.

Providers should be acquainted with the new Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations related to activities programming so they can facilitate compliance with surveyor guidelines. More important, however, the new CMS regulations can act as a catalyst to create new opportunities for nurses to collaborate with their colleagues in recreational, occupational, and activities therapy, as well as in other specialties, to enhance the availability of pleasurable, meaningful, and appropriate activities for residents of long-term care facilities. Beyond meeting the new surveyor guidelines, nurses can be part of innovative multidisciplinary teams that ensure the interests, needs, and well-being of all residents are accommodated. They can also help to evaluate the effect of these new regulations on important outcome parameters, such as family and resident satisfaction, functional and cognitive status, and quality of life.

WEB RESOURCES FOR GERONTOLOGICAL NURSES

- www.culturechangenow.com
- www.edenalt.com
- www.pioneernetwork.net
- www.qualitypartnersri.org
(click on Nursing Homes)

Sections of the new regulations of particular interest to geriatric nurses include certified nursing assistant and nurse interviews, record reviews, and comprehensive care planning. Interested readers are referred to excellent coverage of this material in the *Activities Directors' Quarterly for Alzheimer's & Other Dementia Patients* ("Part II: New CMS Regulations," 2006). The full content of the revised surveyor guidelines is available on the CMS Web site (<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/>), and the Prime National Publishing Corporation Web site (<http://www.pnpco.com>) posts relevant abstracts and references related to the new regulations. The new activities regulations complement for culture changes to provide a more resident-directed approach to long-term care. The Sidebar lists Web sites that are available as resources for gerontological nurses to learn more about this approach.

For most gerontological nurses who practice in long-term care settings, more guidelines and new regulations are the last thing in the world they want imposed on them. However, the new CMS rules provide a promising

opportunity to develop or expand existing activities programs to better and more meaningfully engage older residents, and in so doing, to address issues such as boredom and depression. In short, nurses are urged to reframe the new guidelines to facilitate culture change that may improve quality of life for both residents and staff.

Reference

Part II: New CMS regulations. (2006). *Activities Directors' Quarterly for Alzheimer's & Other Dementia Patients*, 7(3), 7-11.