

2.5 Assessment Types and Definitions

In order to understand the requirements for conducting assessments of nursing home residents, it is first important to understand some of the concepts and definitions associated with MDS assessments. Concepts and definitions for assessments are only introduced in this section. Detailed instructions are provided throughout the rest of this chapter.

Admission refers to the date a person enters the facility and is admitted as a resident. A day begins at 12:00 a.m. and ends at 11:59 p.m. Regardless of whether admission occurs at 12:00 a.m. or 11:59 p.m., this date is considered the 1st day of admission. Completion of an OBRA Admission assessment must occur in any of the following admission situations:

- when the resident has never been admitted to this facility before; OR
- when the resident has been in this facility previously and was discharged return not anticipated; OR

- when the resident has been in this facility previously and was discharged return anticipated and did not return within 30 days of discharge (see Discharge assessment below).

Assessment Combination refers to the use of one assessment to satisfy both OBRA and PPS assessment requirements when the time frames coincide for both required assessments. In such cases, the most stringent requirement of the two assessments for MDS completion must be met. Therefore, it is imperative that nursing home staff fully understand the requirements for both types of assessments in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to remain in compliance with both OBRA and PPS requirements. Sections 2.10 and 2.11 provide more detailed information on combining PPS and OBRA assessments. In addition, when all requirements for both are met, one assessment may satisfy two OBRA assessment requirements, such as Admission and OBRA Discharge assessment.

Assessment Completion refers to the date that all information needed has been collected and recorded for a particular assessment type and staff have signed and dated that the assessment is complete.

- For OBRA-required Comprehensive assessments, assessment completion is defined as completion of the CAA process in addition to the MDS items, meaning that the RN assessment coordinator has signed and dated both the MDS (item Z0500) and CAA(s) (item V0200B) completion attestations. Since a Comprehensive assessment includes completion of both the MDS and the CAA process, the assessment timing requirements for a comprehensive assessment apply to both the completion of the MDS and the CAA process.
- For non-comprehensive and Discharge assessments, assessment completion is defined as completion of the MDS only, meaning that the RN assessment coordinator has signed and dated the MDS (item Z0500) completion attestation.

Completion requirements are dependent on the assessment type and timing requirements. Completion specifics by assessment type are discussed in Section 2.6 for OBRA assessments and Section 2.9 for PPS assessments.

Assessment Reference Date (ARD) refers to the specific endpoint for the observation (or “look-back”) periods in the MDS assessment process. The facility is required to set the ARD on the MDS Item Set or in the facility software within the required time frame of the assessment type being completed. This concept of setting the ARD is used for all assessment types (OBRA and PPS) and varies by assessment type and facility determination. Most of the MDS 3.0 items have a 7-day look-back period. If a resident has an ARD of July 1, 2011, then all pertinent information starting at 12:00 a.m. on June 25th and ending on July 1st at 11:59 p.m. should be included for MDS 3.0 coding.

Assessment Scheduling refers to the period of time during which assessments take place, setting the ARD, timing, completion, submission, and the observation periods required to complete the MDS items.

Assessment Submission refers to electronic MDS data being in record and file formats that conform to standard record layouts and data dictionaries, and passes standardized edits defined by CMS and the State. Chapter 5, CFR 483.20(f)(2), and the MDS 3.0 Data Submission Specifications on the CMS MDS 3.0 web site provide more detailed information.

Assessment Timing refers to when and how often assessments must be conducted, based upon the resident's length of stay and the length of time between ARDs. The table in Section 2.6 describes the assessment timing schedule for OBRA-required assessments, while information on the PPS assessment timing schedule is provided in Section 2.8.

- For OBRA-required assessments, regulatory requirements for each assessment type dictate assessment timing, the schedule for which is established with the Admission (comprehensive) assessment when the ARD is set by the RN assessment coordinator and the Interdisciplinary Team (IDT).
- Assuming the resident did not experience a significant change in status, was not discharged, and did not have a Significant Correction to Prior Comprehensive assessment (SCPA) completed, assessment scheduling would then move through a cycle of three Quarterly assessments followed by an Annual (comprehensive) assessment.
- This cycle (Comprehensive assessment – Quarterly assessment – Quarterly assessment – Quarterly assessment – Comprehensive assessment) would repeat itself annually for the resident who: 1) the IDT determines the criteria for a Significant Change in Status Assessment (SCSA) has not occurred, 2) an uncorrected significant error in prior comprehensive or Quarterly assessment was not determined, and 3) was not discharged with return not anticipated.
- OBRA assessments may be scheduled early if a nursing home wants to stagger due dates for assessments. As a result, more than three OBRA Quarterly assessments may be completed on a particular resident in a given year, or the Annual may be completed early to ensure that regulatory time frames between assessments are met. However, States may have more stringent restrictions.
- When a resident does have an SCSA or SCPA completed, the assessment resets the assessment timing/scheduling. The next Quarterly assessment would be scheduled within 92 days after the ARD of the SCSA or SCPA, and the next comprehensive assessment would be scheduled within 366 days after the ARD of the SCSA or SCPA.

Assessment Transmission refers to the electronic transmission of submission files to iQIES. Chapter 5 and the CMS MDS 3.0 web site provide more detailed information.

Comprehensive MDS assessments include both the completion of the MDS as well as completion of the CAA process and care planning. Comprehensive MDSs include Admission, Annual, SCSA, and SCPA.

Death in Facility refers to when the resident dies in the facility or dies while on a leave of absence (LOA) (see LOA definition). The facility must complete a Death in Facility tracking record. No Discharge assessment is required.

Discharge refers to the date a resident leaves the facility or the date the resident's Medicare Part A stay ends but the resident remains in the facility. A day begins at 12:00 a.m. and ends at 11:59 p.m. Regardless of whether discharge occurs at 12:00 a.m. or 11:59 p.m., this date is considered the actual date of discharge. There are three types of discharges: two are OBRA required—return anticipated and return not anticipated; the third is Medicare required—Part A PPS Discharge. A Discharge assessment is required with all three types of discharges. Section