

OASIS-E1 Changes: How Your Agency Can Prepare for 2025

October 29, 2024

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The release of OASIS-E1, the latest version of the OASIS assessment tool, is just around the corner on January 1, 2025. That means that it's time for agencies to ensure that their clinicians are on top of the changes to ensure accurate reporting, optimized reimbursement, and compliance with the latest regulatory standards.

To help you navigate these updates, I've outlined the key changes in OASIS-E1 that you should be most concerned with, along with strategies that your agency can implement to adapt effectively.

Understanding the Key Changes in OASIS-E1

First of all, the most important thing is to not stress too much about the upcoming changes. While OASIS-E1 introduces several notable changes that will affect clinical documentation and agency operations, know that the upcoming revisions are straightforward and manageable. Even though the changes are not as major as they were in the previous shift from OASIS-D to OASIS-E, understanding them is still essential for accurate data collection and improved patient outcomes.

New Data Points

COVID-19 Vaccination Status: A new question will ask about the patient's COVID-19 vaccination status at transfer and discharge. This differs from previous assessments conducted at the start of care. Agencies must now align with CDC guidance to determine if a patient is up to date on vaccinations at the appropriate times, ensuring compliance with evolving health guidelines.

Removed Data Points

- **Therapy Need (M2200):** The item related to therapy visits has been removed, as it is no longer tied to payment adjustments under the Patient-Driven Groupings Model (PDGM). This change reflects a broader shift in how therapy services are reimbursed, moving away from visit-based adjustments.
- **Episode Timing (M0110):** This question has been eliminated because episode timing data (such as early/late and institutional/community) is now collected from claims data.

Removing this item streamlines OASIS documentation, reducing redundancy in data collection.

Changed Data Points

- Clarification of Discharge Disposition (M2420): The Discharge Disposition question has been updated to provide clear definitions for formal assistive services. This change helps reduce confusion, ensuring more accurate and consistent reporting across agencies.
- Functional Status Items (GG130 and GG170): The “goals” column in these items will be removed by January 2025. CMS is moving to a predictive discharge score based on initial assessments and risk factors, making the “goals” column unnecessary.
- Patient Mood Interview (D0150): CMS has refined instructions for assessing patients who are “rarely or never understood.” This update provides clearer guidance, ensuring consistency in how mood interviews are conducted.

With these changes in mind, it’s essential to equip your team with the right training. Medbridge’s OASIS-E1 Training Solution offers comprehensive instruction for both new and experienced staff, ensuring your clinicians are prepared for the updates.

Strategies for Navigating OASIS-E1

To help your agency successfully implement OASIS-E1, here are five key strategies to ensure smooth integration, accurate data collection, and ongoing compliance.

1. Strategy 1: Implement a Comprehensive Training Plan for All Staff

Why it’s important: The 2025 OASIS-E1 changes will require all staff, regardless of experience level, to be familiar with the new data set. Inadequate training could lead to errors, noncompliance, and potential penalties.

Actionable tip: Develop a comprehensive training plan for your team and certify that everyone has completed their training. Consider enrolling staff in OASIS-E1 certification programs to ensure complete proficiency.

2. Strategy 2: Improve Data Collection Accuracy with Targeted Booster Courses

Why it’s important: As the home health landscape becomes more complex, accurate data collection is vital for avoiding penalties and optimizing patient outcomes, especially under the new value-based purchasing model (HHVBP).

Actionable tip: Use technology to improve accuracy in data collection without the time burden of in-person training. Consider enrolling your staff in online booster courses that focus on improving data collection in key OASIS items impacting HHVBP performance.

3. Strategy 3: Stay Current with Continuing Education

Why it's important: OASIS-E1 changes won't stop with the 2025 update. Agencies should implement ongoing education to stay compliant with future CMS regulations and maintain quality care.

Actionable tip: Set a recurring schedule for OASIS-E1 refreshers to ensure that your staff stays informed about updates. Regular continuing education in the form of live webinars, booster updates, and refresher courses helps prevent knowledge gaps and ensures long-term compliance.

4. Strategy 4: Align Your OASIS Strategy with HHVBP

Why it's important: With OASIS data now accounting for 35 percent of HHVBP scoring, documentation accuracy is essential to avoid financial repercussions and maximize reimbursement.

Actionable tip: Educate your team on how OASIS-E1 impacts HHVBP. Ensure that employees understand the interplay between the two and why it's so important to accurately report data that affects patient outcomes and your agency's bottom line. The Medbridge HHVBP course series helps agencies align their OASIS training with HHVBP benchmarks and best practices.

5. Strategy 5: Create a Culture of Accuracy and Accountability

Why it's important: To successfully adapt to the upcoming OASIS-E1 changes, it's important to foster a culture of accuracy and accountability within your agency. Clinicians should feel empowered to seek clarification whenever they encounter uncertainty in the documentation process. By encouraging open communication and making it clear that questions are welcomed, you not only reduce the risk of errors but also ensure that everyone is on the same page as the new standards come into effect.

It's equally important to emphasize ownership of documentation. When clinicians understand the critical role their data plays in patient outcomes, reimbursement, and compliance, they are more likely to take their responsibilities seriously. By promoting accuracy and accountability, your agency can foster an environment in

which clinicians are motivated to provide precise, compliant, and timely documentation—leading to better patient care and operational efficiency.

Actionable tip: Incorporate regular feedback loops and provide opportunities for additional training or mentorship where needed. These measures ensure that your team is not only prepared for OASIS-E1 but also continuously improving their skills, which will benefit your agency well beyond this transition.