

National Citizens' Coalition for  
**NURSING HOME REFORM**

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From: the National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform:

By: Carter and Frank Williams, Sarah Burger and an assist from Sara Hunt: recommend

Re: new Section B on the MDS. 3.0

**Section B. Cognitive/Behavioral Patterns**

|   |           |   |  |            |            |
|---|-----------|---|--|------------|------------|
| <i>MDS 2.0<br/>Moved from<br/>Section E</i> | <b>B6</b> | <b>Cognitive/<br/>Behavioral<br/>Symptoms</b> | <p><b>(A) Symptom of unmet need: Frequency in last 7 days</b><br/>                 0. No symptoms in last 7 days<br/>                 1. Symptom occurred on 1 to 3 days in last 7 days<br/>                 2. Symptom occurred on 4 to 6 days, but less than daily<br/>                 3. Symptom occurred daily</p> <p><b>(B) Symptom alterability in last 7 days</b><br/>                 0 Symptom not present OR easily altered<br/>                 1 Symptom was not easily altered</p> |            |            |
|   |           |   | (a) WANDERING: repeated moving about, seemingly oblivious to safety  |            |            |
|   |           |   | (b) VISIBLY UPSET: VERBAL SYMPTOMS - cursing, screaming at others, threatening others  |            |            |
|   |           |   | (c) VISIBLY UPSET: PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS hitting, kicking, pushing, scratching, tearing things, grabbing, sexual contact without consent   |            |            |
|   |           |   | (d) OTHER SYMPTOMS OF UNMET NEEDS - vocal noisiness, screaming, banging, self-abusive acts, public sexual acts, disrobing in public, smearing or throwing food or feces, hoarding, rummaging through other's belongings  |            |            |
|   |           |   | (e) REJECTS THE WAY CARE IS GIVEN - including taking medications/injections, ADL assistance, bathing eating  | <b>(A)</b> | <b>(B)</b> |

Rationale: The overarching reason for changes in wording is to turn caregivers' thinking around from blaming the resident and ignoring the need to find the cause of a behavior to doing a good assessment to find the unmet need. The first step toward this goal was achieved when CMS (then HCFA) changed the wording, "behavior problems" to "behavioral Symptoms" on the MDS 2.0. The wording in the RAPs has never been changed.

The second step is to cease using pejorative words to describe the residents' behaviors, which puts them again at a disadvantage. Medical, nursing and other personnel are used to the words "sign or symptom" to describe something a patient is experiencing, which needs further assessment. For instance, a resident's fever needs further assessment to discover the cause, which may include everything from infection to dehydration.

The first step was to simplify the (A) and (B) sentences to emphasize "symptom" and the time frame. The second step is to, wherever possible, use symptoms titles and descriptions, which are less pejorative.

(a) Wandering: Took out with "no rational purpose," because for those who are demented the individual often has a purpose, the caregivers just do not know what it is. Took out "needs or" for the same reason. Added "about" after "moved" because that is the dictionary definition and describes it in neutral language.

(b) Verbally Aggressive Behavioral Symptoms. This was changed to "Visibly Upset: Verbal Symptoms." It is neutral. Took out "verbal aggression" because it is pejorative and the other words describe the symptom.

(c) Physically Aggressive Behavioral symptoms. This was changed to "visibly Upset: Physical Symptoms" Changed "sexually abusing others" to "sexual attentions without consent." Who is going to define sexual abuse? But sexuality without consent describes the action that must be protected against.

(d) Non aggressive Behavioral Symptoms. This was changed to "Other Symptoms of an Unmet Need" The descriptors remain except for sexual behavior. The way it reads would mean any sexual behavior is not permitted in a nursing home, which is not what you are trying to achieve. At least we don't think you are. The issue would seem to be where the act occurs, "public sexual acts" may describe the symptom better.

(e) The change from "Resists Care" to Resists the Way Care is Given" is excellent and highly responsive! A slight improvement that indicates "choice" (the lack of which is one reason for these behaviors) is "Rejects the way care is given."