



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Sheena Majette
smajette@amda.com
410-740-9743**

February 2, 2010

Web-based CME on Mental Health Documentation Designed to Address Needs of as many as 50% of Nursing Facility Residents

Columbia, MD – AMDA has developed a Web-only continuing medical education monograph, [*Mental Health Documentation in the Nursing Home*](#) to help physicians care for their patients with mental health problems. More physicians who have patients in long term care settings are seeing such conditions. Recent studies report that more than 50% of nursing home residents have dementia, and many have other mental health issues such as delirium, mood and anxiety disorders, or psychiatric disorders.

“Documentation of nursing home residents’ mental health is not just a good idea to assess symptoms, disorders, and progress with intervention; it is the law,” says Lory Bright-Long, MD, CMD, lead author of the CME monograph. Dr. Bright-Long was part of a special Mental Health Workgroup AMDA organized to develop the most comprehensive information on this topic. The group was comprised of psychiatrists and primary care physicians who are intimately involved with the integration of medical-cognitive-behavioral aspects of care. Dr. Bright-Long notes, “We recognized that capturing and documenting this integration was lacking in facilities. So we developed this monograph to improve resident care through increased awareness and the promotion of tools that facilities can use.”

The CME program begins with a discussion about what physicians need to know about the Medicaid-required Pre-admission Screening/Annual Resident Review (PASARR) to identify serious mental illness/mental retardation and developmental disabilities in an individual who is seeking placement in a nursing facility. Completion of PASARR provides insight for a facility to ensure that the prospective resident actually requires skilled nursing care and can be appropriately managed in the nursing facility.

The monograph also addresses what should be included in facility policies and procedures to capture cognition, mood, and behavior on admission. Important elements of the monograph are a comprehensive list of tools that can be used to assess cognition and mental status and a template to implement documentation.

Education about mental health documentation in this care setting is critical, says Dr. Bright-Long. “The entire long term care picture has changed significantly over the last 25 years. The patients and the care they need are increasingly complex. There is a constant influx of professionals who are new to nursing home care and the biopsychosocial component of it,” she says.

—more—

2/...

Nearly 4 million Americans have dementia, and many of these are in nursing homes or will be admitted to a facility at some point. Behavioral issues are common with this and other mental health issues. Therefore, the monograph addresses the monitoring of neuropsychiatric symptoms with behavioral management. This, says the document, begins with staff understanding the antecedent to the behavior, the behavior itself, the consequences of the behavior, and the potential danger before a behavioral plan can be instituted. Additionally, the CME piece details what documentation of medication management should include and contains a checklist regarding antidepressant use and several case studies.

Additional online education can be found at www.amda.com/cmedirect/#pgms.

The American Medical Directors Association (AMDA) is the national professional association of medical directors, attending physicians, and other professionals practicing long term care medicine committed to the continuous improvement of patient care. The organization provides education, advocacy, information, and professional development for medical directors and other practitioners from various disciplines working together to deliver quality long term care.

###