

## **Ask the Experts: Coding OASIS M0490 for Patient Requiring Ventilator**

*NAHC Responds to Members' Inquiries and Concerns*

**Q:** *How should Outcome and Assessment Information Set (OASIS) item M0490 be coded for a patient who requires a ventilator?*

**A:** **From the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):** "For any patient who requires a ventilator, we are confident that assessment of the patient's respiratory status is being performed. M0490 asks when the patient is noticeably short of breath. In the response options, examples of shortness of breath under varying levels of exertion are presented.

One component of a respiratory status assessment would be to evaluate if (and under what circumstances) the patient becomes short of breath. The questioner does not indicate whether ventilator use is continuous or intermittent. If the continuously ventilator-dependent patient never becomes short of breath, regardless of level of exertion, while on the ventilator, then response '0' applies.

The other responses reflect varying levels of exertion, all the way to shortness of breath even while at rest. If ventilator use is intermittent, then the level of [the patient's] shortness of breath should be determined without the ventilator."

**Note:** *The National Association for Home Care & Hospice has written to CMS expressing concern that OASIS data may not be providing an accurate picture of a patient's disease state, limitations, needs, and outcomes with this response. NAHC asked CMS to consider whether this response actually identifies measurement of a person's ability to breathe independently or the adequacy of the machine to sustain breathing.*

*NAHC recommends the addition of a response to M0490 specific to persons requiring continuous ventilator assistance, because to say that a person on continuous ventilator assistance is "never short of breath" leaves a false impression. In addition, selecting "0, never" fails to capture the resource needs required for care of these patients under the PPS case-mix system. Although there is an OASIS item that reflects ventilator use, it is not included in the case-mix.*