

## Hurricane Disaster Statement

As a consequence of the 2005 hurricanes, Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt, waived certain requirements for nursing home providers to complete and submit the Minimum Data Set (MDS) for a limited period of time.

The waiver applies to nursing homes in the states in which the Secretary has declared a public health emergency, and only to the extent the nursing home has been affected by the hurricane or is treating evacuees. The effected states are: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Texas, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Utah.

Because of hurricane damage to nursing homes, many beneficiaries have been evacuated to other states where receiving hospitals and nursing homes have no health care records, information on current health status or even verification of the person's status as a Medicare or Medicaid beneficiary.

Some nursing home providers in the effected states may have been unable to submit MDS data to allow the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to create the outcome reports for *Nursing Home Compare*. However, these data are only one aspect of care a nursing home provides and you should consider other factors when choosing a nursing home. To help you make important decisions for your self or someone you care for, please view a *Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home* publication. (Link publication to this site <http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Pubs/pdf/02174.pdf>.) If you have questions about the lack of nursing home outcomes, please contact the specific nursing home for more details.