FIELD DEFINITIONS.

Question - How are complaints and incidents counted?
Answer - Intakes are counted from the Received By field. The choices for this field are E-mail, In-person, Telephone, Written, Media, Hotline, Fax and Other.

Question - If one person calls with ten allegations about one provider, how many complaints is this?
Answer - This is counted as one complaint.

Question - If six people call with the same allegation, how many complaints is this?
Answer - If 6 people call in with the same allegation, this is counted as 6 complaints.

Question - If one letter is received with one or many allegations and signed by 20 people, how many complaints is this?
Answer - One… Although there may be many allegations involved, there was only one correspondence received.

Question - If one person calls with an allegation about three different hospitals, how many complaints is this?
Answer – This would be considered three different allegations because an intake form would be needed for each hospital.

Question - What is an External Control Number?
Answer - The External Control Number is an optional field defined by the States for internal tracking purposes.

Question - For non-EMTALA complaints that allege a situation where immediate jeopardy may be present and ongoing, the survey agency should investigate this complaint within how many working days of receipt?
Answer - Situations involving immediate jeopardy should be investigated within 2 working days.

Question - Where should Immediate Jeopardy be entered in ACTS?
Answer - Users should enter Immediate Jeopardy (IJ) on the Intake or Allegation tab, and set the Priority to IJ.

Question - On the Intake tab, where would you indicate a complaint or incident was referred?
Answer - You would indicate that a complaint or incident was referred by checking one of the referral boxes in the Priorities field in ACTS.

Question - As a Priority choice, what's the difference between Referral Immediately and Referral Other?
Answer - A State's policies and procedures related to a specific allegation may dictate the urgency of the referral. For example, intakes that allege a very serious situation or a specific type

of situation may need to be referred immediately. Other intakes may need to be referred according to State policy. The ACTS system provides the capability to track both types of referral procedures.

Question - The survey agency determines that no onsite survey or further investigation is necessary for a complaint. What should be entered into the Priority field?
Answer - When the survey agency determines that the complaint does not need a survey or an investigation, the survey agency enters No Action Necessary into the Priority field.

Question - A survey agency decides to investigate 5 complaints and 7 incidents on one complaint survey. How many survey events should be created for this survey?
Answer - Only one survey event. Each of the complaints and incidents can be linked to this one event to indicate that they were investigated at the same survey.

Question - For nursing homes, when there is past noncompliance related to the allegation and a Federal civil money penalty is imposed, is the allegation substantiated or unsubstantiated?
Answer - For a nursing home with past noncompliance related to the allegation and a Federal civil money penalty is imposed, the allegation is substantiated.

Question - Which tag is past noncompliance cited at on the CMS-2567?
Answer - For nursing homes, past noncompliance is cited at tag F-698 on the CMS-2567.

Question - How is F698 indicated in ACTS?
Answer - When tag F698 is cited on the CMS-2567 and a survey is linked to the complaint, ACTS automatically generates a check in the past noncompliance box which is located at the Actions/Close Tab.

EMTALA AND DEEMED PROVIDERS
Question - Who is responsible for authorizing a complaint validation survey for a deemed provider or supplier?
Answer - The CMS Regional Office is responsible for authorizing a complaint validation survey for a deemed provider or supplier.

Question - Can the CMS Regional Office delegate the authorization responsibility for a complaint validation survey of a deemed provider or supplier to a survey agency?
Answer - The CMS Regional Office cannot delegate the authorization responsibility…as indicated in Chapter 3, Section 3263 of the State Operations Manual.

Question - In the ACTS system, how is the authorization for a complaint validation survey completed?
Answer - To authorize a complaint validation survey, the Regional Office must complete the signature section on the Deemed tab. This includes completing the Regional Office response box, specifying the Regional Office representative, authorizing the survey, checking off the appropriate Region Number, and specifying the Regional Office authorization date. If the Regional Office wishes to provide additional comments to the survey agency regarding its response, the Regional Office may include them in the comments box on the Deemed tab.

Question - Now, let's assume that Mr. Jones calls the survey agency with an EMTALA allegation for a deemed hospital. Is a complete CMS Form 1541A necessary?
Answer - Yes, the CMS Form 1541A is necessary regardless of whether or not the hospital is deemed.

Question – In the Mr. Jones' scenario, is it necessary to complete the Form 2802 for an EMTALA allegation?
Answer - At this point, no. Since Mr. Jones' complaint pertains only to EMTALA allegations, the Form 2802 is not required.

Question - While the surveyors are at the deemed hospital to investigate Mr. Jones' EMTALA allegations, it appears that the hospital may not be in compliance with the Federal conditions of participation. What should the State do?
Answer - The survey agency should contact the Regional Office to receive authorization to conduct a validation survey of the deemed hospital.

Question - On the Deemed tab, what must the RO complete to authorize the survey?
Answer - To authorize a complaint validation survey, the Regional Office must complete the signature section on the Deemed tab. This includes completing the Regional Office response box, specifying the Regional Office representative, authorizing the survey, checking off the appropriate Region Number, and specifying the Regional Office authorization date.

Question - Which TABS should be used for an allegation involving EMTALA for a non-deemed hospital?
Answer - The Intake, Allegation, EMTALA, Investigation, and Actions/Close tabs would be used for an EMTALA allegation involving a non-deemed hospital.

Question - If the SA receives a complaint on a deemed facility, can the survey agency enter any information on the Deemed tab prior to receiving RO authorization.
Answer - No, the survey agency may enter which conditions to survey; however, they cannot conduct a complaint validation survey until the RO authorizes the survey verbally or through the ACTS system.

Question – Can the Regional Office complete both the RO Confirmed Violation and the RO Confirmed No Violation fields on the EMTALA tab.
Answer - No, only one of these date fields must be completed.

Question - How do you enable data entry of the Deemed tab?
Answer - To enable data entry on the deemed tab, check the box "Deemed for Medicare Participation."

ASSOCIATING V. LINKING
Question - What is the difference between associating and linking complaints and incidents?
Answer - Associating allows users to reference related intakes. This feature is enabled by clicking the "Click Here to Associate" button on the Intake tab. It is not used frequently and associating intakes is not required for uploads. Linking is different. If multiple complaints and

incidents are investigated on one survey at the same time, they should be linked to the survey by checking the box next to the appropriate survey event on the Investigation page.

Question - A survey agency receives two complaints related to similar issues and are investigated at two separate times. The survey agency would like to track whether the complaints are related to one another. Should the user link the complaints to the same investigation event OR associate the complaints with one another? And Why?
Answer - The user should associate the complaints to indicate that they are related to one another. Since the complaints were investigated on two separate surveys, they cannot be linked to the same investigation. However, on the Intake tab, the Associate button could be used to indicate that these complaints were related to one another in some way.

Question - How does ACTS indicate whether a complaint or incident is linked to an investigation?
Answer - The Investigation tab for an intake shows which investigation the complaint or incident was investigated. ACTS indicates if a complaint or incident is linked to an investigation on the Investigation Properties/562 View. This view lists all of the complaints and incidents reviewed at a particular investigation. Under the Investigation tab in the Tree view, expanding an investigation will show a list of the linked intakes. Various reports in ACTS also show which intakes are linked to an investigation.

Question - For a complaint, a survey agency determines that an onsite survey is necessary to determine whether Federal requirements have been met. How can the survey agency enter data to show that this complaint is being investigated?
Answer - Users can easily show if a complaint was investigated. When an onsite visit is necessary, on the Investigation page, the user can link the complaint to an investigation or create a new survey by selecting the appropriate checkbox.

Question - Now, assume Mrs. Smith reports to the survey agency that her mother had received the wrong medications at her nursing home. A week ago, the survey agency had conducted a re-certification survey for the facility and had examined the same issues described in Mrs. Smith's complaint. In addition, Mrs. Smith's mother was included in the sample. The survey agency decides not to go onsite again. On the Investigations tab for this complaint, what should the ACTS user do?
Answer - The user should link the complaint to last week's re-certification survey by selecting the checkbox next to that survey event. There would be no need to create a new survey event for this case.

Question - Can revisit surveys be linked to a complaint?
Answer - No. Currently, ASPEN will not allow a complaint investigation to be combined with an existing revisit.

Question - The survey agency finds that as a result of an investigation, there are deficiencies related to an allegation. How should the survey agency enter data to show this?

Answer - Under the Allegations tab, the SA would select the appropriate Allegation and click the Link Deficiencies button. Then they would select the appropriate deficiencies that are related to the allegation.

Question - How can I tell if there are deficiencies cited unrelated to the complaint?
Answer - On the Allegations tab, there are checkboxes that indicate if there are deficiencies unrelated to the complaint. This feature will work only if the user indicates that the complaint is linked to an investigation.

SYSTEM UPLOADS
Question - Since the 562 is limited to uploading 5 allegations, which allegations should be uploaded if more than 5 allegations are investigated?
Answer - If more than 5 allegations are investigated, allegations with Federal deficiencies cited should take precedence over other allegations.

Question - How does ACTS calculate the Date Acknowledged on the 562?
Answer - ACTS uses the earliest phone or written acknowledgment date in the Notices section of all of the intakes linked to an investigation. For uploads, users can override this calculation by entering the Date Acknowledged field manually on the Investigation Properties-562 View.

Question - How do you update information in ACTS that has already been uploaded to the OSCAR Complaint System?
Answer - To update information in ACTS, the user should make changes in ACTS and upload the kit again. This will override existing data in OSCAR Complaint System. If the data was originally entered using the OSCAR Complaint system, the user should update the information in the OSCAR Complaint system.

REQUIRED FIELDS
Question – Which fields are required for upload to National systems, required for closing the case in ACTS, required for both, or not required?
Answers:
External Control Number - Not required
Intake Type - Required for both upload and closure.
Intake Subtype - Required for both upload and closure.
Alleged perpetrator information - Not required
Source - Required for both.
Priority - Required for both upload and closure.
Received End Date - Required for both.
Received End Time - Not required.
In Compliance Date - Not required.
Plan of Correction Approved Date - Not required.
If a survey is conducted, Proposed Action - Required for both.
And Reason Closed - Required for closing the case in ACTS, but not for upload.

ACTION ITEMS/FILTERS
Question - Who can delete Action Items?

Answer - For now, only the Regional Office could delete Action Items; however, in the ACTS 6.5 release, either the States or the Regional Offices can delete their own Action Items.

Question - How can you delete Action Items?
Answer - From the main menu, you would select System on the tool bar, then Action Item History. In the Action Item Trail window, click Delete. In the Action Item Delete Range window, enter a Start Date and an End Date to specify the time range of the action items you want to delete. Click OK. Say Yes to the confirmation prompt. Click Close. This should delete those Action Items.

Question - Who receives the Actions Items?
Answer - The Action Items are received by whomever is designated as the responsible party for a complaint or incident. If no RO responsible party is specified, all RO users for the region receive the Action Item.

Question - How can you view Actions Items?
Answer - You can view your Action Items when you log onto ACTS. To view your Action Items, click on “My Action Items” on the Facility tab. Your action items will be listed in the detail view. The new ACTS 6.5 feature which allows users to change the status of multiple Action Items by highlighting Action Items in their list, right-clicking on them, and choosing “Change Action Items’ status” menu item. This will allow the user to quickly close whole groups of Action Items.

Question - What are red action items?
Answer - Red Action Items are Investigation tasks.

Question - What are blue action items?
Answer - Blue action items are for complaint and incident processing tasks.

Question – What are green action items?
Answer - Green action items are for Regional Office staff.

Question - What happens when no Regional Office responsible party is designated for a complaint or incident?
Answer - All staff in the region will receive the Action Items related to that complaint or incident.

Question - How can a user filter Action Items?
Answer - Starting from the Facility or Staff tab on the Tree view, the user would right-click on “My Action Items,” then select New Action Item Filter. When the Action Item Filter Setting window appears, the user can filter by Date, Status or Type. The user then enters Filter Name and clicks OK. In ACTS, the user’s current “My Selections” filter setting for a provider type will limit the Action Items accordingly.

Question - How do you create a filter?
Answer - Starting from the Facility tree view, you would right click on "My Selections." And then click "New Selections." On the Selection Properties window click the "Show box" on the upper left-hand corner to activate the filter. You can filter according to Facility Type, Status, Location Received, Responsible Team, Date, Type and Operating Status. Here you would enter a Filter name and select OK. Only the items matching the criteria you had selected will be displayed in the tree.

Question - How can you view only Medicaid-only nursing facilities?
Answer - From the Facility Tree view, you would click on "My Selections," and a list of provider types will appear. You would right-click on 'NF Only' and select Activate.

REPORTS/LETTERS
Question - If you need to know how many complaints and incidents were received for a facility, how could you find out in ACTS?
Answer - Under the Tree View, right-click on a provider and select , which will show the number of intakes entered into ACTS, taking into account the user's active My Selections filter.

Question - How do you generate Quick reports, such as the Intake and Investigation Reports?
Answer - In the Tree View, right-click on an intake and select Quick Reports. Select the reports you would like to view or print.

Question - How can you select more than one Quick Report to be printed?
Answer - You can check off multiple reports when the Quick Reports box pops up.

Question - Besides the Quick Reports, how can you generate more reports in ACTS?
Answer - The Reports menu has a whole list of other reports that can be created from ACTS

TIPS
Question - How do you track the status of a complaint or incident in ACTS?
Answer - There are a number of ways to check the status of a complaint/incident in ACTS. One way is to locate the complaint/incident on the Status tab in the Tree view, where complaints/incidents are grouped by status. Also, the user may locate and select status groups on the Status tab. Complaints/incidents with the given status are displayed in the List view.

Question - How can you print a screen?
Answer - First, you open Microsoft Word. Next, open ACTS and press the Print Screen button on your keyboard to copy the desired screen to the Clipboard. Toggle back to Microsoft Word and you can paste into the document. You may then print from Word.

Question - To redact means to omit text. In word processing boxes, how could text be redacted?
Answer - In ACTS, redaction applies to the Intake Notes and Allegation Detail and Findings text. On the word processors for these fields, there is a Redact button in the toolbar. When a user highlights text and presses this Redact button, square brackets are placed at the beginning and at the end of the highlighted text. Instead of using the Redact button, the user also has the option of manually typing in the left and right brackets around the needed text with the same

effect. Once text has been redacted, the text is only blocked out in one of the summary reports and in any letters that use the Allegation Text-Redacted macros. <End Graphic>

Question - How do you enter State allegation categories?
Answer - Only CMS may create or edit categories; however, the States can add State Licensure subcategories. Starting from the main menu Tool bar, the user would select System, then Lookup Tables, then Allegation Subcategories. In the "Allegation Subcategories Lookup Choices" window, they would select Allegation 35 – State Licensure. Under here, they would select New and they would enter a value code and description for the subcategory and select OK. States may also setup their own subcategories under most of the other allegation categories.

Question - How can Activities lookup values be customized?
Answer - The Activities lookup values have been predefined. However, this is one of the lookup value lists that States can expand. You can add new State-specific Activity choices by selecting System Menu, then Lookup Tables, and Standard Lookups. The Lookup Values Dictionary window will appear. On the tree in this window, select the table 'INVEST'. Right-click on the 'TYPES' branch of the tree and choose 'New Value'. When the Input Lookup Values window appears, enter a new Activity. Once entered, State-specified activities can be fully maintained from this same area and you can delete or modify State-specified activity choices as needed.

Question - Is security the same for ACTS and ACO?
Answer - Security is basically the same throughout ASPEN. But since the implementation and usage of ACTS and ACO differ, the two applications have a different list of security groups and a different list of menu items for which security can be specified. The security menu items in ACTS include password protection, facility type, and menu protection.

Question - Can an intake be moved from one facility to another?
Answer - No, an intake cannot be move from one facility to another. In this situation, you need to delete the incorrect intake and create another for the correct facility. Running an intake report before deleting may help with data entry. Also, standard Windows cutting and pasting of text from the incorrect intake to the correct intake is possible.

Question - How can you add State licensure only facility types that do not participate in the Medicare or Medicaid programs?
Answer - New facilities can be added using ASPEN Central Office or ASPEN Regional Office. State agencies can add their own facility types using ASPEN Central Office. ACTS shares the database with ACO and ARO. Therefore, once the facilities are entered in ACO, they will appear in ACTS.

Question - Can a user work on an intake that is locked by another user?
Answer - If two people were working on the same intake, one would overwrite the other's entry. However, multiple team members can enter their survey findings at the same time if they go to the Investigation Tree, then right click on the investigation, and choose Citation Manager.

Question - How do you contact the QIES help desk?
Answer - You can e-mail the QIES Help Desk at ASPEN_HELP@IFMC.ORG or you can call the Help Desk at 888-477-7876.

Question - Where can suggestions be made for improving ACTS?
Answer - Go to the QIES Technical Support Office website, which is www.qtso.com Select ASPEN from the left side of the screen. On the next screen, select Suggestions, which is across the top of the screen. Then, you can click Enter a New Suggestion.