

Center for Medicaid and State Operations/Survey and Certification Group

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DATE: February 12, 2004

FROM: Director
Survey and Certification Group

SUBJECT: Calendar Year 2004 Revised Release Schedule for Automated Survey Processing Environment (ASPEN) Software

TO: State Survey Agency Directors

Letter Summary

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify you of the planned release schedule for the ASPEN software for calendar year 2004:

- ASPEN 7.3 is scheduled for release the week of February 23-27, 2004.
- ASPEN 7.5 is scheduled for release the week of May 24-28, 2004.
- ASPEN 8.0 is scheduled for release the week of August 23-27, 2004.
- ASPEN 8.1 is scheduled for release the week of November 22-26, 2004.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has revised the calendar year 2004 release schedule for ASPEN software.

ASPEN 7.3

ASPEN 7.3, originally scheduled for release to state agencies and CMS Regional Offices (RO) the week of January 26-30, 2004, will now be released the week of February 23-27, 2004. The release date was revised based on the complexity of this version and the need for additional testing time. ASPEN 7.3 includes the new ASPEN Scheduling and Tracking (AST) module. AST supports both state and CMS RO certification, complaint, and enforcement processing operations. While states are not required to use this module, they were required to notify their RO of their activation decision by February 10, 2004. QIES Technical Support Office (QTSO) Memo 2003-165 sent to state agency and RO systems contacts, dated December 30, 2003, provides an overview of the AST module and directions for requesting activation of this module.

ASPEN 7.3 also includes software enhancements to ASPEN Central Office (ACO), ASPEN Regional Office (ARO), the ASPEN Complaints and Incidents Tracking System (ACTS), the ASPEN Enforcement Manager (AEM) and ASPEN Survey Explorer (ASE). A detailed description of the software enhancements included in this release was provided to state agencies and CMS RO systems contacts via QTSO memo #2004-015, dated January 30, 2004.

Training guides and Webex recordings for AST are available for download on the QIES Technical Support Office (QTSO) website. The address for the QTSO website is www.qtso.com.

ASPEN 7.5

ASPEN 7.5 is now scheduled for release to state agencies and CMS ROs the week of May 24-28, 2004. ASPEN 7.5 includes the transition from the Online Survey Certification and Reporting (OSCAR) data entry of certification and complaint surveys to the ASPEN system for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICFs/MR), Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASC) and Hospice providers. State agencies will be required to use ASPEN and ACTS for the entry of information related to the certifications and complaints of these provider types. ASPEN 7.5 will also include an interface to support the Surveyor Technical Assistant for Renal disease (STAR) software pilot and the conversion of the Hospital A-tag interpretative guidelines.

ASPEN 8.0

ASPEN 8.0 is now scheduled for release to state agencies and CMS ROs the week of August 23-27, 2004. ASPEN 8.0 includes the production release of AEM. State agencies will be required to use AEM for tracking of Nursing Home enforcements. ASPEN 8.0 also includes the transition from the OSCAR online data entry of certification and complaint surveys to the ASPEN system for Organ Procurement Organizations (OPO), Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC), Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF). State agencies will be required to use ASPEN and ACTS for the entry of information related to these provider types.

ASPEN 8.1

ASPEN 8.1 is scheduled for release the week of November 22-26, 2004. ASPEN 8.1 will provide functionality for states to download ACTS data into their states' systems. The ACTS download will be optional for state agencies.

If you have any questions, please contact Pam Bosley at (410) 786-6455 or via E-mail at Pbosley1@cms.hhs.gov.

/s/
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cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management (G-5)