Q: How long can a respite stay be before an OBRA admission assessment must be completed?

A: The OBRA Resident Assessment Instrument (RAI) manual states this for respite/short term stays:

Short-term or respite residents: An RAI must be completed for any individual residing more than 14 days on a unit of a facility that is certified as a long-term care facility for participation in the Medicare or Medicaid programs. If the respite resident is in a certified bed, the OBRA assessment schedule and tracking document requirements must be followed. If the respite resident is in the facility for fewer than 14 days, an OBRA Admission assessment is not required; however, a Discharge assessment is required:
— Given the nature of a short-term or respite resident, staff members may not have access to all information required to complete some MDS items prior to the resident’s discharge. In that case, the “not assessed/no information” coding convention should be used (“-”) (See Chapter 3 for more information).
— Regardless of the resident’s length of stay, the facility must still have a process in place to identify the resident’s needs, and must initiate a plan of care to meet those needs upon admission.
— If the resident is eligible for Medicare Part A benefits, a Medicare assessment will still be required to support payment under the SNF PPS.