Q: There appears to be some confusion with regard to pneumococcal immunizations. What is the federal/state requirement regarding the different pneumonia vaccines?

A: Federal regulations at “§483.25(n) Influenza and pneumococcal immunizations (n)(2)(ii),” require nursing homes to develop policies and procedures to ensure that “each resident is offered pneumococcal immunization, unless the immunization is medically contraindicated or the resident has already been immunized” and that “the resident or resident’s legal representative was provided education regarding the benefits and potential side effects of pneumococcal immunization.”

Due to advances in medicine, standards of practice regarding vaccines are constantly changing. When assessing compliance with 42CFR§483.25(n)(2), surveyors assess whether the facility offers pneumococcal immunizations and education to reflect the current recommendations.

In September 2014, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that PCV13 and the 23 valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine or PPSV23 (Pneumovax 23) should be routinely administered in series to all adults aged ≥65 years. Specific information regarding dosing can be found on the CDC website (http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/).