

OASIS Alert

Industry Notes:

Study Boosts Pneumonia Vaccine

Your patients may receive better protection against pneumonia in the future, depending on the outcome of a **National Institutes of Health**-funded study. Researchers plan to see if a higher dose of a pneumococcal vaccine will create a stronger immune response in older adults who received an earlier generation vaccine against pneumonia and other pneumococcal diseases. The trial will enroll up to 882 men and women ages 55 to 74.

A randomized clinical trial will test and compare three groups of patients, NIH says in a release: those who received the old vaccine (PPSV23 -- Pneumovax 23) three to seven years ago and a new lower dose of PPSV13 (Pevnar 13); those who received Pneumovax 23 three to seven years ago and a new higher dose of Pevnar 13; and those who did not receive Pneumovax 23, just the new lower dose of Pevnar 13.

"Earlier studies suggest that PCV13 may not induce as strong an immune response in older adults who previously received the PPSV23 vaccine within the past 5 years as in those who have not," the NIH notes.

The trials will take place at **University of Iowa, Saint Louis University, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center-Infectious Diseases, Vanderbilt University's** Vaccine Research Center, **Baylor College of Medicine**, and the **Group Health Research Institute** in Seattle, the NIH says in the release.

Get This Update On Venipuncture Coverage

The Medicare Benefit Policy Manual states that venipuncture cannot be the only skilled service the patient needs to qualify for home health eligibility. So "if a patient has a port and the patient is only having home health services for blood draws from the port would that be covered?" an HHA asked HHH MAC **NHIC** in a recent Ask the Contractor Teleconference.

The answer: "If the port was being used to give medication, then it could be reasonable," NHIC replies in a question-and-answer document from the ACT. "If the patient's only skilled service is nursing for blood draws from a port, the patient is not eligible for services under the home health benefit."

Access New OASIS-C Training

Check out new OASIS-C training modules at <http://surveyortraining.cms.hhs.gov/pubs/ProviderTraining.aspx>. The new sessions join existing courses to offer education on pressure ulcers, wounds, the neuro/emotional/behavioral domain, medications, and care planning and interventions.