



Center for Medicaid, CHIP, and Survey & Certification/Survey & Certification Group

Ref: S&C: 11-37-NH

**DATE:** September 7, 2011

**TO:** State Survey Agency Directors

**FROM:** Director  
Survey and Certification Group

**SUBJECT:** Issuance of Revisions to Interpretive Guidance at F tag 322, as Part of Appendix PP, State Operations Manual (SOM)

**Memorandum Summary**

- **Revision to F tag 322:** Revisions have been made to Guidance to Surveyors at F tag 322 in Appendix PP of SOM concerning Feeding Tubes.
- **Collapsed F tag 321:** F tag 321 is deleted and the regulatory language and guidance moved to F tag 322.
- **Training:** Power Point training material with speaker notes for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Regional Offices (ROs) and State Survey Agencies (SAs) to be used to train surveyors on this revision to F tag 322 in the SOM will be issued under a separate communication.

The CMS made changes to surveyor guidance for Feeding Tubes in Appendix PP of the SOM to provide clarification to nursing home surveyors when determining compliance with the regulatory requirements for feeding tubes. The regulatory language will remain unchanged.

We deleted F tag 321 which contained language about not using feeding tubes unless unavoidable, and incorporated the guidance into F tag 322.

This revision will be implemented on November 30, 2011. At that time, a final copy of this new guidance will be available at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/> and ultimately incorporated into Appendix PP of the SOM.

Here, we are providing an advance copy of the revised guidance (attachment). All new language is presented in red and italics. Also attached to this memorandum are training materials for the revised tag.

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These materials will be presented and discussed in a teleconference with ROs in Fall 2011. We encourage training to be conducted in person with group discussion to optimize learning. However, if this is not feasible to meet the needs of your surveyors, it is acceptable to use other methods. This guide may also be used to communicate with provider groups and other stakeholders.

Advance copy of the surveyor guidance is enclosed with this memorandum.

PowerPoint training slides will be made available to ROs and SAs under a separate communication.

RO training coordinators will document the completion of training on this new guidance for all RO and State nursing home surveyors within their Region.

For questions on this memorandum, please contact Debra Spears at 410-786-7506 or via email at [debra.spears@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:debra.spears@cms.hhs.gov).

**Effective Date:** November 30, 2011. The State Agency should disseminate this information within 30 days of the date of this memorandum.

**Training:** The training materials should be distributed immediately to all SA training coordinators.

/s/  
Thomas E. Hamilton

Attachment

cc: Survey and Certification Regional Office Management

## Advance Copy

### 483.25(g) Naso-Gastric Tubes\*

Based on the comprehensive assessment of a resident, the facility must ensure that --

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#### F322

**§483.25(g)(1) A resident who has been able to eat enough alone or with assistance is not fed by naso-gastric tube unless the resident's clinical condition demonstrates that use of a naso-gastric tube was unavoidable; and**

**§483.25(g)(2) A resident who is fed by a naso-gastric or gastrostomy tube receives the appropriate treatment and services to prevent aspiration pneumonia, diarrhea, vomiting, dehydration, metabolic abnormalities, and nasal-pharyngeal ulcers and to restore, if possible, normal eating skills.**

*INTENT: (F322) §483.25(g)*

*\*For the purpose of the interpretative guidelines at F tag 322 the regulatory title “§483.25(g) Naso-gastric tubes” is considered to include any feeding tube used to provide enteral nutrition to a resident by bypassing oral intake.*

*The intent of this regulation is that:*

- The feeding tube is utilized only after adequate assessment determines that the resident's clinical condition makes this intervention medically necessary;*
- A feeding tube is utilized in accordance with current clinical standards of practice and services are provided to prevent complications to the extent possible; and*
- Services are provided to restore normal eating skills to the extent possible.*

#### **DEFINITIONS**

##### **“Avoidable/Unavoidable use of a feeding tube”**

- “Avoidable” means there is not a clear indication for using a feeding tube or there is insufficient evidence that it provides a benefit that outweighs associated risks.*
- “Unavoidable” means there is a clear indication for using a feeding tube or there is sufficient evidence that it provides a benefit that outweighs associated risks.*

**“Bolus feeding”** is the administration of a limited volume of enteral formula over brief periods of time.

**“Continuous feeding”** is the uninterrupted administration of enteral formula over extended periods of time.

**“Enteral nutrition”** (a.k.a. “tube feeding”) is the delivery of nutrients through a feeding tube directly into the stomach, duodenum, or jejunum.

**“Feeding tube”** refers to a medical device used to provide enteral nutrition to a resident by bypassing oral intake.

**“Gastrostomy tube”** (“G-tube”) is a tube that is placed directly into the stomach through an abdominal wall incision for administration of food, fluids, and medications. The most common type is a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube.

**“Jejunostomy tube”** (a.k.a. “percutaneous endoscopic jejunostomy” (PEJ) or “J-tube”) is a feeding tube placed directly into the small intestine.

**“Nasogastric feeding tube”** (“NG tube”) is a tube that is passed through the nose and down through the nasopharynx and esophagus into the stomach.

**“Transgastric jejunal feeding tube”** (“G-J tube”) is a feeding tube that is placed through the stomach into the jejunum and that has dual ports to access both the stomach and the small intestine.

**“Tube feeding”** (a.k.a. “enteral feeding”) is the delivery of nutrients through a feeding tube directly into the stomach, duodenum, or jejunum.

## **OVERVIEW**

A decision to use a feeding tube has a major impact on a resident and his or her quality of life. It is important that any decision regarding the use of a feeding tube be based on the resident’s clinical condition and wishes as well as applicable federal and state laws and regulations for decision making about life-sustaining treatments.

The use of feeding tubes varies widely within and among states. Reasons for this variability are unclear, but they may include diverse opinions about the benefits and risks of non-oral nutrition, and variable facility policies and usual practices.<sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

**NOTE:** Refer to §483.10(b)(4) and (b)(8), Notice of Rights and Services, Right to Refuse Treatment and Experimental Research and to Formulate Advance Directives; and §483.15(b), Self-Determination and Participation, in order to determine if the use of a feeding tube is consistent with the wishes and instructions of the resident, if known (e.g., verbal or handwritten instructions, advance directive or living will) or the instructions

*of the resident's legal representative, if the resident is unable to make his or her wishes known.*

## **RESOURCES**

- ***The American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (A.S.P.E.N.)** is dedicated to improving patient care by advancing the science and practice of nutrition support therapy. A.S.P.E.N. maintains a Guidelines and Standards Library. The Guidelines and Standards make specific practice recommendations.  
<http://www.nutritioncare.org/Library.aspx>*
- ***The Alzheimer's Association** offers a fact sheet regarding care and patient rights: **Ethical Issues in Alzheimer's Disease, Assisted Oral Feeding and Tube Feeding.**  
[http://www.alz.org/alzwa/documents/alzwa\\_Resource\\_EOL\\_FS\\_Oral\\_Feeding.pdf](http://www.alz.org/alzwa/documents/alzwa_Resource_EOL_FS_Oral_Feeding.pdf)*

***NOTE:** References to non-CMS sources or sites on the Internet are provided as a service and do not constitute or imply endorsement of these organizations or their programs by CMS or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. CMS is not responsible for the content of pages found at these sites. URL addresses were current as of the date of this publication.*

## **CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE USE OF FEEDING TUBES**

*The regulations at §483.25(g) require that the resident's clinical condition demonstrates the use of a feeding tube to be unavoidable. A feeding tube may be considered unavoidable only if no other viable alternative to maintain adequate nutrition and/or hydration is possible and the use of the feeding tube is consistent with the clinical objective of trying to maintain or improve nutritional and hydration parameters.<sup>6</sup>*

*Several factors may be involved in the decision to use a feeding tube including medical conditions that impair the resident's ability to maintain appropriate nutritional parameters (e.g., cerebrovascular accident, esophageal cancer, delirium, reconstructive facial or oral surgery), the need to improve the resident's nutritional status or level of comfort, or the desire to prolong the resident's life. The duration of use of a feeding tube may vary, depending on the clinical situation.*

*The interdisciplinary team, with support and guidance from the physician, is responsible for assuring the ongoing review, evaluation and decision-making regarding the continuation or discontinuation of all treatments, devices or approaches implemented to care for the resident. Involving the resident, family, and/or the resident's legal representative in discussions about the indications, use, potential benefits and risks of tube feeding, types of approaches, and alternatives helps support the resident's right to make an informed decision to use or not use artificial nutrition and hydration.*

*A clinically pertinent rationale for using a feeding tube includes, but is not limited to:*

- *An assessment of the resident's nutritional status, which may include usual food and fluid intake, pertinent laboratory values, appetite, and usual weight and weight changes;*
- *An assessment of the resident's clinical status, which may include the ability to chew, swallow, and digest food and fluid; underlying conditions affecting those abilities (e.g., coma, stroke, esophageal stricture, potentially correctable malnutrition that cannot be improved sufficiently by oral intake alone); factors affecting appetite and intake (e.g., medications known to affect appetite, taste, or nutrition utilization); and prognosis;*
- *Relevant functional and psychosocial factors (e.g., inability to sufficiently feed self, stroke or neurological injury that results in loss of appetite, psychosis that prevents eating); and*
- *Interventions prior to the decision to use a feeding tube and the resident's response to them. (Refer to F325 for discussion and examples of interventions to improve and restore normal nutritional parameters.)*

***NOTE:** Refer to §483.20 Resident Assessment and the Assessment Section of the General Investigative Protocol at Quality of Care (F309) for discussion of the comprehensive evaluation that comprises an assessment.*

*The use of a feeding tube may potentially benefit or may adversely affect a resident's clinical condition and/or psychosocial well-being. Examples of some possible benefits of using a feeding tube may include:*

- *Addressing malnutrition and dehydration;*
- *Promoting wound healing; and*
- *Allowing the resident to gain strength, receive appropriate interventions that may help restore the resident's ability to eat and, perhaps, return to oral feeding.*

*Examples of some possible adverse effects of using a feeding tube may include:*

- *Diminishing socialization, including, but not limited to, the close human contact associated with being assisted to eat or being with others at mealtimes;*
- *Not having the opportunity to experience the taste, texture, and chewing of foods;*
- *Causing tube-associated complications; and*
- *Reducing the freedom of movement related to efforts to prevent the resident from pulling on the tube or other requirements related to the tube or the tube feeding.*

*In order to assure that the resident being fed by a feeding tube maintains the highest degree of quality of life possible, it is important to minimize possible social isolation or negative*

*psychosocial impact to the degree possible (e.g., continuing to engage in appropriate activities, socializing in the dining room). Because of the possible side-effects and discomfort associated with the use of nasogastric tubes, there should be clinically pertinent documentation for extended use of nasogastric tubes (e.g., greater than 30 days).*

*Nutrition and feeding issues and their underlying causes in the resident with advanced dementia or other chronic neurological disorders such as Parkinson's disease present a particular set of issues and considerations that are discussed in F325. The extended use of enteral feeding tubes in individuals with advanced dementia remains controversial. The literature regarding enteral feeding of these individuals suggests that there is little evidence that enteral feeding improves clinical outcomes (e.g., prevents aspiration or reduces mortality).<sup>7,8,9,10,11,12</sup>*

### ***Resident Rights***

*The regulations at 483.10(d)(2) state that the resident has the right to be fully informed in advance about care and treatment and of any changes in the care or treatment that may affect the resident's well-being. In addition, the regulations at 483.10(b)(4) state that the resident has the right to refuse treatment and to formulate an advance directive.*

*If a resident has had a feeding tube placed prior to admission or in another setting while residing in the facility, the physician and interdisciplinary care team review the basis (e.g., precipitating illness or condition change) for the initial placement of the feeding tube and the resident's current condition to determine if there is a continued rationale for its use and to ensure that its continued use is consistent with the resident's treatment goals and wishes. Decisions to continue or discontinue the use of a feeding tube are made through collaboration between the resident (or a legal representative for a resident who lacks capacity to make and communicate such decisions), the physician, and the interdisciplinary care team. This includes a discussion of the relevance of a feeding tube to attaining a resident's goals (e.g., whether the nutritional intervention is likely to have a significant impact on the individual's underlying condition or overall status).*

### ***TECHNICAL AND NUTRITIONAL ASPECTS OF FEEDING TUBES***

*It is important that staff providing care and services to the resident who has a feeding tube are aware of, competent in, and utilize facility protocols regarding feeding tube nutrition and care. These protocols are required to be developed with the medical director in order to assure staff implement and provide care and services according to resident needs and clinical standards of practice.*

#### ***Technical Aspects of Feeding Tubes***

*Facility procedures regarding the technical aspects of feeding tubes include, but are not limited to, the following:*

**Location of the feeding tube.** Direction to staff regarding how to monitor and check that the feeding tube is in the right location (e.g., stomach or small intestine, depending on the tube) or verify that placement was checked, such as:

- Techniques to verify that tube placement is appropriate before beginning a feeding and before administering medications; and
- The frequency with which staff should monitor for proper location of the feeding tube to assure that the enteral retention device is properly approximated to the abdominal wall and the surrounding skin is intact.

**Care of the feeding tube.** Direction to staff on how to provide care such as:

- Securing a feeding tube externally;
- Providing needed personal, skin, oral, and nasal care to the resident;<sup>13</sup>
- Examining and cleaning the insertion site in order to identify, lessen or resolve possible skin irritation and local infection;
- Using infection control precautions and related techniques to minimize the risk of contamination; for example, in connecting the tube and the tube feeding; and
- Defining the frequency of and volume used for flushing, including flushing for medication administration, and when a prescriber's order does not specify.

**Feeding tube replacement.** Direction for staff regarding the conditions and circumstances under which a tube is to be changed, such as:

- When to replace and/or change a feeding tube (generally replaced either as planned/scheduled or as needed such as when a long-term feeding tube comes out unexpectedly or a tube is worn or clogged);
- How and when to examine a feeding tube and the infusion plug to identify splits or cracks that could produce leakage;
- Instances when a tube can be replaced within the facility and by whom;
- Instances when a tube must be replaced in another setting (e.g., hospital, ambulatory surgery center); and
- Notification of the practitioner when the need for a tube change arises unexpectedly.

**Nutritional Aspects of Feeding Tubes**

*When a resident is receiving nutrition via a feeding tube, the practitioner and the interdisciplinary team identify the resident's nutritional needs and facility procedures that direct staff in providing care and services to the resident. The practitioner's orders related to tube feeding typically include the following components: kind of feeding and its caloric value; volume, duration, and mechanism of administration (e.g., gravity or pump); and frequency of flush.*

*Facility procedures regarding the nutritional aspects of feeding tubes include, but are not limited to:*

***Enteral nutrition.*** *Direction to staff regarding the nutritional product and meeting the resident's nutritional needs such as:*

- *Types of enteral nutrition formulas available for use;*
- *How to determine whether the tube feedings meet the resident's nutritional needs and when to adjust them accordingly;*
- *How to balance essential nutritional support with efforts to minimize complications related to the feeding tube;*
- *Ensuring that the selection and use of enteral nutrition is consistent with manufacturer's recommendations;*
- *Ensuring that the administration of enteral nutrition is consistent with and follows the practitioner's orders; and*
- *Ensuring that the product has not exceeded the expiration date.<sup>14 15</sup>*

***Flow of feeding.*** *Direction for staff regarding how to manage and monitor the rate of flow, such as:*

- *Use of gravity flow;*
- *Use of a pump;*
- *Periodic evaluation of the amount of feeding being administered for consistency with practitioner's orders;*
- *Calibration of enteral feeding pumps to ensure that pump settings accurately provide the rate and volume consistent with the resident's care plan; and*
- *Periodic maintenance of feeding pumps consistent with manufacturer's instructions to ensure proper mechanical functioning.*

***Complications Related to the Feeding Tube***

*An enteral feeding tube may be associated with significant complications, including aspiration, leaking around the insertion site, abdominal wall abscess, or erosion at the insertion site including the nasal areas. Feeding tubes can perforate the stomach or small intestine, with resultant peritonitis. Esophageal complications of feeding tubes may also occur including esophagitis, ulcerations, strictures, and tracheoesophageal fistulas. The use of tubes not designed or intended for enteral feeding may increase the risk of complications.<sup>16,17</sup>*

*Tubes may clog for various reasons, including plugging by formula, pill fragments, or the precipitation of medications incompatible with the formula.<sup>18</sup> Flushing feeding tubes regularly and in association with medication administration, as indicated by current clinical standards of practice and provided in the resident care policies, can help reduce the risk of clogging.*

### ***Complications Related to the Administration of the Enteral Nutrition Product***

*The administration of an enteral nutrition product may be associated with other complications including, but not limited to, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, inadequate nutrition and aspiration. Additionally, interactions between the formula and various medications can affect the absorption and/or effectiveness of the medication. For example, the effectiveness of phenytoin sodium may be reduced by the drug binding with the enteral feeding's protein component, leading to less free drug availability and possibly inadequate therapeutic levels.*

*Metabolic complications related to tube feeding may include inadequate calorie or protein intake, altered hydration, hypo- or hyperglycemia, and altered electrolyte and nutrient levels. These risks may be reduced by calculating the nutritional needs of the resident, taking into account comorbid conditions and medications that affect these balances, monitoring for adequate nutritional status and complications, and adjusting the tube feeding accordingly.*

*While a feeding tube may be initiated with the intent to address certain medical conditions, the use of a feeding tube does not necessarily decrease the risk of aspiration for individuals with other risk factors, such as moderate or less severe swallowing abnormalities. Aspiration risk may potentially be affected by factors such as diminished level of consciousness, improper positioning of the resident during administration of the feeding, and failure to assure the feeding tube is correctly positioned within the stomach or intestine. The evidence is inconsistent and conflicting regarding any connection between gastric residual volume and the risk or occurrence of aspiration.<sup>19</sup>*

*Risk of aspiration should be assessed individually and appropriate interventions (e.g., proper positioning, rate of flow) implemented accordingly. There may be situations where other coexisting factors influence decisions about elevating the head of the bed; for example, a resident being fed by a tube who may be at risk for shearing by sliding down the sheets when the head of the bed is elevated to a recommended angle.*

### ***Complications Management***

*The facility is expected to identify and address actual or potential complications related to the feeding tube or tube feeding and to notify and involve the practitioner in evaluating and managing care to address these complications and risk factors.*

## **INVESTIGATIVE PROTOCOL FOR FEEDING TUBES**

### **Objectives**

- *To determine if a feeding tube is utilized only after adequate assessment determines that the resident's clinical condition makes this intervention medically necessary;*
- *To determine if a feeding tube is utilized in accordance with current clinical standards of practice and if services are provided to prevent complications to the extent possible; and*
- *To determine if services are provided to restore normal eating skills to the extent possible.*

### **Use**

*Use this protocol for a resident who has a feeding tube.*

### **Procedures**

*The surveyor(s) should conduct the following observations, interviews and record reviews. If there are concerns regarding the facility's use and care of feeding tubes, review facility policies and practices with regard to the use and care of feeding tubes.*

### **Observations**

*During various shifts, observe staff interactions with the resident and provision of care including: initiation, continuation, and termination of feedings; care of the tube site and equipment; and medication administration via the feeding tube, if possible. Use the observations to determine whether staff follow clinical standards of practice, facility policy, the resident care plan, and prescriber's orders and if they try to minimize the risk for complications including but not limited to:*

- *Implementing interventions to minimize the negative psychosocial impact that may occur as a result of tube feeding;*
- *Providing mouth care, including teeth, gums, and tongue;*
- *Checking that the tubing remains in the correct location;*
- *Properly positioning the resident consistent with the resident's individual needs;*
- *Using universal precautions and clean technique and following the manufacturer's recommendations when stopping, starting, flushing, and giving medications through the feeding tube;*

- *Ensuring the cleanliness of the feeding tube, insertion site, dressing (if present) and nutritional product; and*
- *Providing the type, rate, volume and duration of the feeding as ordered by the practitioner and consistent with the manufacturer's recommendations.*

*Note staff response if there is evidence of possible complications, such as diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort, nasal discomfort (if a nasogastric tube is being used); evidence of leakage and/or skin irritation at the tube insertion site; or risk of inadvertent removal of the tube.*

### ***Interviews***

#### *Resident/Representative*

*Interview the resident and/or resident's legal representative (as appropriate) regarding involvement in development of the care plan including goals and approaches; whether the interventions reflect the resident's choices and preferences; and the resident's response to the tube feeding, including the following:*

- *Whether staff provided assistance to the resident to increase the food intake, prior to inserting a feeding tube (e.g., identifying underlying causes of anorexia; hand feeding; changing food consistency, texture, form; offering alternate food choices; and/or providing assistive devices);*
- *Whether the resident and/or the resident's legal representative (as appropriate) was informed about the relevant benefits and risks of tube feeding, and involved in discussing alternatives and making the decision about using a feeding tube;*
- *Whether the resident has had any significant new or worsening physical, functional or psychosocial changes; whether the resident informed the staff; and how the problems were addressed;*
- *Whether there has been a reassessment and discussion with the resident or the resident's legal representative regarding the continued appropriateness/necessity of the feeding tube.*

***NOTE:*** *Prior to inserting a feeding tube, the prescriber reviews the resident's choices/instructions and goals, including all relevant information that may be identified in advance directives (See F155, F156 and F242).*

#### *Facility staff*

*Interview staff that provide direct care on various shifts to determine:*

- *How staff and practitioner determined the cause(s) of decreased oral intake/weight loss or impaired nutrition and attempted to maintain oral intake prior to the insertion of a feeding tube, such as did staff collaborate with the physician to identify medical causes of decreased appetite or try to help the resident eat enough food (e.g., cueing or hand feeding; changing food consistency, texture, form; seeking and addressing causes of anorexia; providing assistive devices);*
- *What the specific care needs for the resident are (e.g., special positioning, personal care, insertion site care, amount of feeding taken in);*
- *How the staff determined the resident's nutritional status was being met such as periodically weighing the resident and how they decide whether the tube feeding is adequate to maintain acceptable nutrition parameters;*
- *Whether the resident has voiced any complaints or exhibited any physical or psychosocial complications that may be associated with the tube feeding (e.g., nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, pain associated with the tube, abdominal discomfort, depression, withdrawal); and how these problems have been addressed;*
- *To whom a staff member has reported the resident's signs or symptoms; and*
- *Whether there has been a periodic reassessment and discussion with the resident or his/her legal representative regarding the continued appropriateness/necessity of the feeding tube; and whether the care plan has been revised and implemented as necessary.*

#### *Health care practitioners and professionals*

*The assigned surveyor should review, as indicated, the facility's policies, procedures, records of incidents and corrective actions related to feeding tubes; documentation of staff knowledge and skills related to the aspects of administering tube feeding; and should, as necessary, interview facility staff with responsibility for overseeing or training in this aspect of care to determine:*

- *How the facility identified the resident at risk for impaired nutrition, identified and addressed causes of impaired nutrition, and determined that use of a feeding tube was unavoidable;*
- *How staff calculated nutritional needs for the resident and how they ensure that the resident receives close to the calculated amount of nutrition daily;*
- *How staff monitor the resident for the benefits and risks related to a feeding tube, and address adverse consequences of the feeding tube use (e.g., altered mood, nausea and vomiting, pain, or restraint use to try to prevent the resident from removing the feeding tube);*

- *How staff are trained and directed regarding management of feeding tubes and tube feedings in general, and in addressing any specific issues related to this individual resident;*
- *Whether the physician and staff attempted to identify the circumstances that led to the placement of the feeding tube (e.g., when the tube was placed in another facility); and*
- *Whether the resident was periodically reassessed for the continued appropriateness/necessity of the feeding tube; and whether the care plan was revised and implemented, as necessary, with input from the resident or his/her legal representative, to the extent possible.*

**NOTE:** *During the course of the review, if the surveyor needs to contact the attending physician regarding questions related to the treatment regimen, it is recommended that the facility's staff have the opportunity to provide the necessary information about the resident and the concerns to the physician for his/her review prior to responding to the surveyor's inquiries. If the attending physician is unavailable, interview the medical director, as appropriate.*

### **Record Review**

*Review information such as physician orders, tube feeding records, multidisciplinary progress notes, RAI/MDS and any available assessment regarding the rationale for feeding tube insertion and the potential to restore normal eating skills, including the interventions tried (to avoid using the feeding tube before its insertion, restore oral intake after tube insertion, and prevent potential complications). In order to identify concerns or to further investigate identified concerns about tube feedings, review to determine:*

- *How the staff verify that the feeding tube is properly placed;*
- *That staff are assigned responsibilities for various aspects of enteral feedings consistent with their position and training (e.g., administering the feeding, determining and verifying correct formula; calculating the amount of formula, feeding intervals, flow rate);*
- *How staff have monitored a resident for possible complications (e.g., diarrhea, nutritional deficits, aspiration, depression, withdrawal, etc.) related to a feeding tube and the tube feeding, and have identified and addressed such complications; and*
- *That the resident was periodically reassessed and the care plan was revised and implemented, as necessary with input from the resident or his/her legal representative, to the extent possible.*

## ***Review of Facility Practices***

*Related concerns may have been identified that would suggest the need for a review of facility practices. Examples of such activities may include a review of policies, staffing, and staff training, functional responsibilities, and interviews with staff (including facility management). If there is a pattern of residents who have issues related to the indications, utilization, complications, process or performance issues with feeding tubes, determine whether the facility has incorporated into its quality assurance activities a review of appropriateness and management of tube feedings.*

## ***DETERMINATION OF COMPLIANCE***

### ***Synopsis of Regulation (F322)***

*The feeding tube requirement has two aspects. The first aspect requires that the facility utilizes a feeding tube only after it determines that a resident's clinical condition demonstrates this intervention was unavoidable. The second aspect requires that the facility provides to the resident who is fed by a tube, services to prevent complications, to the extent possible, and services to restore normal eating skills, if possible.*

### ***Criteria for Compliance***

*The facility is in compliance with 42 CFR §483.25(g), if staff:*

- Use a feeding tube to provide nutrition and hydration only when the resident's clinical condition makes this intervention necessary based on adequate assessment and after other efforts to maintain or improve the resident's nutritional status have failed;*
- Manage all aspects of a feeding tube and enteral feeding consistent with current clinical standards of practice in order to meet the resident's nutritional and hydration needs and to prevent complications; and*
- Identify and address the potential risks and /or complications associated with feeding tubes, and provide treatment and services to restore, if possible, adequate oral intake.*

*If not, cite at F322.*

### ***Noncompliance for F322***

*After completing the Investigative Protocol, analyze the data in order to determine whether noncompliance with the regulation exists. Noncompliance for F322 may include, but is not limited to, failure to do one or more of the following:*

- Appropriately assess a resident's nutritional status and needs, and identify a clinically pertinent rationale for the use of a feeding tube;*

- *Identify nutritional requirements for a resident fed by a feeding tube and ensure that a tube feeding meets those needs;*
- *Adequately address the nutritional aspects of enteral feeding and the management of the feeding tube, including prevention of related complications; or*
- *Use and monitor a feeding tube per facility protocol and pertinent clinical standards of practice, provide services to attempt to restore, if possible, normal eating skills, or identify and manage tube-related or enteral feeding-related complications.*

### ***Potential Tags for Additional Investigations***

*If an additional concern has been identified, the surveyor must investigate the identified concern. Do not cite any related or associated requirements before first conducting an investigation to determine compliance or non-compliance with the related or associated requirements. Some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *42CFR §483.10(b)(3);(d)(2), F154, Right to Be Fully Informed*
  - *Determine if the facility has fully informed the resident of his or her total health status and has provided the resident with information about the use of a feeding tube (including risks, benefits and alternatives) so that an informed decision can be made.*
- *42 CFR §483.10(b)(4)(8), F155, Notice of Rights and Services, Right to Refuse Treatment and Experimental Research and to Formulate Advance Directives, Maintenance and Provision of Written Policies of These Rights*
  - *Determine if the facility has given the resident or legal representative the opportunity to participate in the decision about tube feeding and informed the resident of the right to make advance directives and to decline life-sustaining treatments including artificial nutrition and hydration;*
  - *Determine if the facility maintains written policies and procedures regarding advance directives; and*
  - *Determine if the facility informs and provides written information to all adult residents concerning the right to accept or refuse medical treatment and formulate advance directives.*
- *42 CFR §483.10(b)(11), F157, Notification of Changes*
  - *Determine if staff notified:*

- *The physician when they suspected or identified inability to maintain adequate oral intake or complications related to use of the feeding tube; and*
  - *The resident and the resident's legal representative (if known) of significant changes in the resident's condition in relation to the feeding tube or inability to take nutrition orally;*
- *42 CFR §483.15(a), F241, Dignity*
  - *Determine whether the staff provided respectful care for the resident being tube fed to maintain and enhance the resident's dignity;*
- *42 CFR §483.15(b), F242, Self-determination and Participation*
  - *Determine whether staff provided the resident with relevant information and choices regarding feeding tubes;*
- *42 CFR §483.20(b), F272, Comprehensive Assessments*
  - *Determine if the resident's comprehensive assessment reflects the resident's nutritional status, including factors that may have contributed to inadequate oral intake, and evaluates the resident's response to the implementation of tube feeding, including nutritional and psychosocial aspects;*
- *42 CFR §483.20(g), F278, Accuracy of Assessments*
  - *Determine whether the assessment accurately reflects the resident's status;*
- *42 CFR §483.20(k), F279, Comprehensive Care Plans*
  - *Determine if the resident's comprehensive care plan includes measurable objectives, time frames, and specific interventions consistent with the resident's specific nutritional status, risks, needs, and current clinical standards of practice. This includes interventions prior to the insertion of the feeding tube to attempt to avoid tube feeding and after the insertion of the tube to prevent tube-related and tube-feeding related complications and restore, if possible, adequate oral intake;*
- *42 CFR §483.20(k)(2)(iii), F280, Comprehensive Care Plan Revision*
  - *Determine if the care plan was periodically reviewed and revised by appropriate staff, in conjunction with the practitioner and with input from the resident or his/her legal representative, to try to meet the resident's*

*nutritional and hydration needs; reduce, prevent, or address potential complications; and attempt to restore normal eating skills, if possible;*

- *42 CFR §483.20(k)(3)(i), F281, Services Provided Meet Professional Standards of Quality*
  - *Determine if staff provided care in accordance with accepted professional standards of quality to maintain or restore adequate oral intake, if possible, and to manage the feeding tube to maintain or improve nutrition and prevent complications, to the extent possible;*
- *42 CFR §483.20(k)(3)(ii), F282, Care Provided by Qualified Persons in Accordance with the Plan of Care*
  - *Determine whether care of the resident with a feeding tube is being provided by qualified staff and/or whether the care plan is adequately and/or correctly implemented;*
- *42 CFR §483.25(i), F325, Nutrition*
  - *Determine if the facility has managed the resident's nutritional interventions to meet the resident's nutritional needs, while using a feeding tube;*
- *42 CFR §483.25(l), F329, Unnecessary Drugs*
  - *Determine if the facility has reviewed the resident's medication regimen for medications that may have caused or contributed to a decline in oral intake, or ability to chew and/or swallow, that may have contributed to the decision to place a feeding tube or affected the efforts to restore normal eating;*
- *42 CFR §483.30, F353, Nursing Services*
  - *Determine if the facility has sufficient nursing staff that is qualified to provide necessary care and services to the resident being fed by a feeding tube;*
- *42 CFR §483.40(a), F385, Physician Supervision*
  - *Determine if a physician is supervising the medical aspects of the tube feedings including assessment of causes of impaired nutritional status, development of a treatment regimen consistent with current clinical standards of practice, monitoring, and response to notification of change in the resident's medical status;*

- 42 CFR §483.60, F425, Pharmacy Services
  - Determine if the policies were developed and implemented for the safe administration of medications for a resident with a feeding tube;
- 42 CFR §483.65, F441, Infection Control
  - Determine if the facility established and maintained an infection control policies for safe and sanitary care and services for a resident being fed by a tube;
- 42 CFR §483.75(i), F501, Medical Director
  - Determine whether the medical director helped the facility develop and implement policies addressing the assessment and management of individuals with impaired or at-risk nutrition and hydration status and recognizing, addressing, and preventing complications related to tube feedings;
- 42 CFR §483.75(l), F514, Clinical Records
  - Determine whether the clinical record:
    - Accurately, completely and, in accordance with current clinical standards, documents: the resident's status (including changes in condition), care and services provided to the resident with a feeding tube, response to treatment and the resident's goals; and
    - Provides the basis for determining the continued need for tube feeding and whether changes in treatment are necessary.

#### **DEFICIENCY CATEGORIZATION (PART IV, APPENDIX P)**

Once the team has completed its investigation, analyzed the data, reviewed the regulatory requirements, and determined that noncompliance exists, the team must determine the severity of each deficiency, based on the harm or potential for harm to the resident.

The key elements for severity determination for F322 are as follows:

1. **Presence of harm/negative outcome(s) or potential for negative outcomes because of lack of appropriate care and services.** Actual or potential harm/negative outcomes for F322 may include but are not limited to:
  - Failure to adequately assess a resident's nutritional status and the care and services needed to maintain or improve the resident's nutritional status and/or to identify why the use of a feeding tube was medically unavoidable;

- *Failure to adequately identify nutritional requirements for a resident fed by a feeding tube and ensure that the tube feeding met those needs (if clinically feasible), resulting in the resident experiencing malnutrition and dehydration;*
  - *Failure to verify the location of the tube in accordance with current clinical standards, facility protocols, and resident condition; therefore increasing the risk for complications such as aspiration; and*
  - *Failure to use and monitor a feeding tube per facility protocol and current clinical standards of practice or to identify and manage feeding tube-related or tube-feeding related complications, thereby allowing the complication to continue without appropriate intervention.*
2. ***Degree of harm (actual or potential) related to the noncompliance.*** *Identify how the facility practices caused, resulted in, allowed, or contributed to the actual or potential for harm.*
- *If harm has occurred, determine if the harm is at the level of serious injury, impairment, death, compromise, or discomfort; and*
  - *If harm has not yet occurred, determine how likely the potential is for serious injury, impairment, death, compromise or discomfort to occur to the resident.*
3. ***The immediacy of correction required.*** *Determine whether the noncompliance requires immediate correction in order to prevent serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to one or more residents.*

*The survey team must evaluate the harm or potential for harm based upon the following levels of severity. First, the team must rule out whether Severity Level 4 (immediate jeopardy to a resident's health or safety) exists by evaluating the deficient practice in relation to immediacy, culpability, and severity. (Follow the guidance in Appendix Q, Determining Immediate Jeopardy.)*

***Severity Level 4 Considerations: Immediate Jeopardy to Resident Health or Safety***

*Immediate jeopardy is a situation in which the facility's noncompliance with one or more requirements of participation:*

- *Has allowed, caused, or resulted in (or is likely to allow, cause, or result in) serious injury, harm, impairment, or death to a resident; and*
- *Requires immediate correction as the facility either created the situation or allowed the situation to continue by failing to implement preventative or corrective measures.*

**NOTE:** *The death or transfer of a resident, who was harmed as a result of facility practices, does not remove a finding of immediate jeopardy. The facility is required to implement specific actions to correct the deficient practices which allowed or caused the immediate jeopardy.*

*Examples of avoidable actual or potential resident outcomes that demonstrate severity at Level 4 may include, but are not limited to:*

- *The facility failed to train staff about how to ensure proper placement of a feeding tube, and/or to ensure that staff were checking for tube placement consistently and correctly. As a result of staff failure to verify tube placement, a resident got peritonitis (infection of the lining of the abdominal cavity) and died following the administration of tube feeding; or*
- *As a result of the facility routinely keeping a resident lying almost flat in bed while administering the resident's tube feeding, the resident aspirated some of the tube feeding and got aspiration pneumonia.*

**NOTE:** *If Severity Level 4 (immediate jeopardy) has been ruled out based upon the evidence, then evaluate whether actual harm that is not immediate jeopardy exists at Severity Level 3 or the potential for more than minimal harm at Severity Level 2 exists.*

### ***Severity Level 3 Considerations: Actual Harm that is Not Immediate Jeopardy***

*Severity Level 3 indicates noncompliance that resulted in actual harm that is not immediate jeopardy. The negative outcome can include but may not be limited to clinical compromise, decline, or the resident's inability to maintain and/or reach his/her highest practicable well-being.*

*Examples of avoidable, actual resident outcomes that demonstrate severity at Level 3 may include, but are not limited to:*

- *The facility failed to monitor for complications related to a resident's feeding tube and tube feeding. As a result, the resident experienced significant but not life-threatening tube feeding-related complications; or*
- *As a result of facility failure to assess the resident's nutritional needs and to continue to administer, monitor, and adjust tube feeding accordingly, a resident experienced significant weight loss that cannot be otherwise attributed to a medically unavoidable cause.*

**NOTE:** *If Severity Level 3 (actual harm that is not immediate jeopardy) has been ruled out based upon the evidence, then evaluate whether Severity Level 2 (no actual harm with the potential for more than minimal harm) exists.*

***Severity Level 2 Considerations: No Actual Harm with Potential for More than Minimal Harm that is Not Immediate Jeopardy***

*Severity Level 2 indicates noncompliance that resulted in a resident outcome of no more than minimal discomfort and/or had the potential to compromise the resident's ability to maintain or reach his or her highest practicable level of well-being. The potential exists for greater harm to occur if interventions are not provided.*

*Examples of avoidable outcomes at Severity Level 2 include, but are not limited to:*

- As a result of staff failure to anchor a feeding tube properly, the resident had leakage and irritation around the tube insertion site that required topical treatment and resolved without complications;*
- As a result of staff failure to manage a tube feeding pump properly, the resident did not receive the calculated amount of tube feeding, without resulting in significant weight loss or other GI complications; or*
- As a result of staff failure to consistently flush a resident's feeding tube as ordered, the tube clogged and had to be replaced, but there were no other complications.*

***Severity Level 1: No Actual Harm with Potential for Minimal Harm***

*The failure of the facility to provide appropriate care and services for feeding tubes, places the resident at risk for more than minimal harm. Therefore, Severity Level 1 does not apply for this regulatory requirement.*

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## ENDNOTES

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