

Policy Related to the Nurse's Role in Medication Administration in Community Based Care Settings

The purpose of this memo is to clarify policy related to the nurse's role in the practice of medication administration in community based care (CBC) settings. We hope these clarifications will promote the usage of nurses in CBC settings in a way that is consistent with Oregon law governing the practice of nursing and consistent with the profession's mission to protect health, safety and rights.

Standards and Scope of Practice for Registered Nurses Practicing within the CBC Setting

The practice of nursing in CBC settings often empathizes monitoring, teaching, and coordination of supports over direct service. As with the practice of nursing in any setting, it is anticipated that:

- All actions taken by nurses are supported by nursing process and professional judgment.
- A registered nurse identifying an actual or potential risk to a person's health and safety must intervene with some sort of action to address the situation. This intervention might be limited to patient teaching or reporting the problem to another team member. Proper documentation will protect the nurse from responsibility for any negative outcomes secondary to a consumer choice and/or lack of supports provided by related team members.
- A RN's professional practice falls under the jurisdiction of the Oregon State Board of Nursing (OSBN). When a RN practices in a community based care licensed setting, the OSBN is regulating that nurse's professional practice. Seniors and People with Disabilities (SPD) regulate the CBC *setting* in which the nurse practices.

Nurses' Role in the Self Administration of Medication

Nurses are often asked to review, teach and monitor a client who is self administering their own medications. If the person is legally competent and wants to administer their own medications, the RN needs to provide the teaching and supports necessary to maximize the person's health management skills. Medisets, pill-minders, written instructions and other aids might be utilized.

If the nurse determines that the person is not capable of safely administering their medications, then the nurse needs to intervene through such actions as contacting the person's family, case manager and/or physician to facilitate needed supports to promote the person's health and safety in regards to medication administration.

If the person is competent and refuses the supports which the nurse thinks are necessary to ensure the best practice of medication administration, then the nurse can continue to teach and provide as much support as the person will accept. This situation might require a risk management plan indicating that the nurse does not have liability for a client's negative outcomes that are related to non-adherence to treatment and/or poor decision making. However, the nurse's responsibility for teaching, assessment, monitoring and coordination of supports does not cease.

Teaching of Medications within the Community Based Care Setting.

The Department of Human Services (DHS), SPD rules for Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs), Residential Care Facilities (RCFs) and Adult Foster Care (AFC) do not mandate the teaching of medication administration by a registered nurse to providers and/or caregivers. Although teaching of medication administration is permitted in these settings per OSBN rules, the need for teaching is left up to the discretion of the nurse based on his/her assessment of an individual client. If a nurse determines that teaching of medications is needed and subsequently provided, then he/she is required to follow OSBN rules related to the practice of teaching administration of noninjectable medications and periodic inspection.

Community based care providers licensed by SPD (ALFs, RCFs, and AFHs) are required via SPD rule to have a system in place that gets the right medications to the right people and the right times in terms of process and outcomes. A facility might decide that to ensure a safe medication administration system that they will require the services of a RN and the subsequent teaching of medication administration by a RN to providers and/or care givers. However, this would be an internal (facility) policy that exceeds both OSBN and SPD rules.

If you have questions about this policy, please contact Gretchen Koch Thompson, Community Based Care Nursing Coordinator (503) 945-6484.