

# FAQ: Medication Administration

## Medications Administration Away from Home

**Question: The consumers in this program are fully involved in the community. When staff take them on outings to malls, senior centers, on trains, etc, staff are carrying the med bottles in "fanny packs" for convenience. The meds stay "on the person" of the staff at all times. Do the fanny packs have to be locked?**

Answer: No, the fanny pack does not need to be locked, provided that it is always with the staff person.

**Question: Must staff sign for medications administered while on an outing?**

Answer: No staff do not have to sign for medications while they are on the outing but they do need to sign for it as soon as they return.

**Question: Do consumers have to have a copy of their prescriptions with them when on vacation?**

Answer: It is always a good idea to have the prescriptions with you. You should definitely check with the carrier you are traveling on (plane, train, cruise, etc.) People will need to have prescriptions with them if it is a liquid med.

**Question: What if someone will need to take one dose of their medication during a time they are going on a fieldtrip away from their day or residential program.**

Answer: When a consumer requires medications while on a field trip away from their day or residential program, staff (RN, LPN or AMAP) may take one dose from the original labeled container, place it in an envelope with the consumer's name, medication, dosage and instructions for taking. If a consumer must take several medications AT THE SAME TIME they may be placed in the same envelope. The envelope must be clearly labeled with each medication's name, dosage and instructions for taking.

**Question: Does the person who prepares the one dose of medication for a consumer who will be away from their program need to be the same person who administers it?**

Answer: While it is best practice that the person preparing the medication be the one to administer it, this is not a requirement. However, it is necessary that the staff administering the medication be someone who is authorized by 14 NYCRR 633.17 to administer medication (i.e., it must be administered by an RN, LPN or AMAP).

**Question: Can staff place medications in a medication organizer for a family member to administer?**

Answer: The State Board for Pharmacy and the State Board for Nursing have determined that it is acceptable for staff to "set up" (otherwise known as re-package) medication in a commercially available medication organizer for *family* to administer to a person while they are away from the facility.

A sheet with the physical description of each pill, its name and what it is for is to accompany the organizer. For example:

7 AM: peach, oval pill with "2775" on it = Avalide 125/12.5 for high blood pressure

8 PM: small white round pill with "AM9" on it = Toprol XL 50 mg for high blood pressure

Bedtime: red, oval capsule = Colace 100 mg Stool softener

The sheet is to include a place for the signature of the person who re-packaged the medication. For example:

Repackaged by :

Signature:

Date:

Please note: This applies only to *families and unpaid personal friends*.

Medications may not be set up in medication organizers for paid staff to administer to a person incapable of self-administration.

**Question: Can AMAPs administer medications when outside of New York State**

Answer: AMAPs are allowed to administer medications in New York State because there of an exemption in the New York State Nurse Practice Act. This exemption applies only in New York State. The exemption requires that there be "adequate medical and nursing supervision." New York State has defined that to mean that an RN must be on site or immediately available by telephone.

Each state has its own nurse practice act that is unique to that state. The vast majority do not allow unlicensed personnel to administer medications. In addition, many require that if a nurse is to be "on-call" and/or providing nursing advice via the telephone that the nurse must be registered in the state where the consumer of services is physically located. Several years ago OPWDD surveyed all states in the eastern United States regarding the legality of direct care staff certified in New York State to administer medications in their state while consumers were on vacation. While several states refused to provide an opinion, the vast majority of those responding stated that it was a violation of their Nurse Practice Act for unlicensed staff to administer medications even when accompanying consumers on vacation.

**Question:How can medication administration be accomplished when out of state?**

Answer: Unless a consumer has been determined capable of self administration of medications, it is the best advice for agencies to either arrange with a sister agency or a public health agency in the area where they are vacationing to provide nurses to administer medications, or to send a nurse with the group to provide whatever nursing care, including medication administration, that the consumers may need.

**Question: If a consumer is independent in administering oral medications and needs assistance in applying body creams e.g., bacitracin ointment, Can this consumer travel out of state?**

Answer: Individuals can always travel out of state. The only issue is what personnel must accompany them to allow for the legal administration of medication.

**Question: If a consumer who is able to administer their own medication is going out of state, can AMAP staff pre-pour and replenish medication supply in a pill organizer or should it be managed by the RN only?**

Answer: Setting up a pill organizer for someone who is able to administer their own medications is not pre-pouring. If the person is going out of state for a week, obviously the pill organizer should be replenished to ensure there is a week's worth of medication in it. If they are going for more than a week, staff accompanying the person should be able to replenish the supply (however, they cannot administer medication out of state).