

Medication Administration by Unlicensed Assistive Personnel

Statement:

New Jersey State Nurses Association recognizes that according to New Jersey (NJ) administrative code 8:36 - 9.2 (2013) medications can be administered by or given with the assistance of unlicensed assistive personnel in settings such as assisted living residences, comprehensive personal care homes, and assisted living programs.

New Jersey State Nurses Association supports medication administration or assisted self-administration by unlicensed assistive personnel when the assistive personnel obtain certification as a Certified Medication Aide (CMA) and the registered nurse (RN) who is delegating obtains the recommended education and adheres to the obligations related to delegation as outlined by the NJ Board of Nursing (BON).

Explanation of Issues:

The NJ standards for assisted living residences, comprehensive personal care homes, and assisted living programs specify to administer medications, CMAs must meet the following requirements: 1) have certification as a nurse aide (CNA), homemaker/home health aide (CHHA), or personal care assistant (PCA), 2) complete the 30-hour medication aide training course approved by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), and 3) successfully pass the NJDOH Certified Medication Aide standardized exam regarding medication administration by personal care assistants (NJ Admin Code 8 § 36 - 9.2, 2013). In order to maintain certification, the CMA must renew their certification and complete ten hours of continuing education every two years (NJ Admin Code 8 § 36 - 9.2 (d), 2013).

The NJ Board of Nursing (BON) administrative code 13:37 - 6.2 (2020), specifies that only a RN may delegate the medication administration task to a PCA/CHHA/CNA who has received verifiable education and demonstrated adequate knowledge, skill, and competency to perform the task of medication administration. Additionally, the NJ BON administrative code, 13:376.4 (2020) outlines the RNs' obligations relating to delegations to a certified HHA or assistive person.

To assist facility trainers/instructors in preparing qualified PCAs, CHHAs, and CNAs to administer medications, under circumstances when the RN delegates the task, the NJDOH requires trainers to attend the Train-the-Trainer Workshop offered by the *Health Care Association of New Jersey* ([HCANJ](#)). The NJDOH has also developed the "Trainer Manual: A resource guide for medication administration" to prepare PCAs, CHHAs, and CNAs to administer medications in assisted living residences, comprehensive personal care homes, or assisted living programs (NJDOH, 2014). It is strongly recommended that RNs who delegate to CMAs attend the Train-the-Trainer Workshop offered by the [HCANJ](#).

Explanation/Definition of Terms

Note that a Certified Medication Aide (CMA) is different from a Certified Medical Assistant. A certified medical assistant is a [medical assistant](#) who has achieved certification through the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) and has been educated and tested in a wide scope of general, clinical, and administrative responsibilities.

Unlicensed assistive personnel are defined as those individuals who have not completed a nursing course of study and have not passed a licensing examination by the Board of Nursing.

Rationale:

An essential element of assisted living is that residents are encouraged to maintain their autonomy and to participate in self-care. To the extent that they are capable, residents in assisted living settings should self-administer their medications and keep their supply of medications in their own apartment/room. When residents are unable to independently self-administer medications, CMAs can supervise or assist the resident in taking the medications or administer the medications.

References:

American Association of Medical Assistants. <https://www.aama-ntl.org/medical-assisting/what-is-a-cma>

NJ Admin. Code tit. 8 § 36 - 9.2. (2013, December 23).

https://nj.gov/health/healthfacilities/documents/rfpappendixes/appendix_a.pdf

NJ Admin. Code tit. 13 § 37-6.2 and 6.4 (2020, October 19).

<https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/regulations/Chapter-37-New-Jersey-Board-of-Nursing.pdf>

NJ Department of Health. (n.d.) Certified Medication Aide.

<https://www.nj.gov/health/healthfacilities/certification-licensing/certified-medication-aide/index.shtml>

NJ Department of Health. (2014). Trainer Manual: A resource guide for medication administration.

https://www.nj.gov/health/healthfacilities/documents/rfpappendixes/appendix_d.pdf

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Revised: June 2021, Congress on Policy and Practice, Susan H. Weaver, PhD, RN, Linda Hassler, DNP, RN, and Reginaldo Antonio, MSN, RN

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