

## **GUIDELINES FOR “LEAVE OF ABSENCE” (LOA) MEDICATIONS FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES**

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Medications must be provided for administration when a resident goes on a leave of absence from the facility. The facility should have policies and procedures for providing leave of absence medications that may include the following:

- The facility should inform physicians of the policies and procedures. The facility may have a policy that limits the quantity of medication sent with a resident without approval of the physician. The physician should be consulted when it is necessary to send a larger quantity if there is concern about resident or family ability to properly handle this quantity related to administering, storing, security, intentional overdose, or return of remaining medication to the facility.
- An authorized facility medication staff member should review current medication orders with the resident or responsible person. When necessary, such as when there are complex instructions or changes in dose, the staff member should provide information regarding administration in writing in addition to the medication label.
- A facility nurse should consult with the physician if a resident is a candidate for special options to accommodate routine absences such as sheltered workshops, school, or other limited absences. These options may include changes in administration times or doses, or omission of doses, when clinically appropriate.
- The facility should inform residents and their families of the policies and procedures.
- The facility should keep a record of the medications and quantities sent with the resident and returned, and the resident or responsible person should sign for the medications. This is especially important for controlled substances.
- Medications returned to the facility should be inspected to see if they are suitable for continued use. They should not be combined with medications in other containers. Containers should be identified as having been sent with the resident and should not later be returned to the pharmacy for reuse.

Facility staff are not allowed by law to repackage or dispense medications. The following options are available to provide leave of absence medications:

- An authorized facility medication staff member may send prescription medication cards or other multiple-dose prescription containers with the resident if the containers are labeled by the pharmacy with instructions for use.
- The pharmacy may provide an appropriate quantity of each medication separately packaged and labeled for home use as part of the regular monthly refill.

- The resident's family or the facility may obtain separate prescriptions for home storage, or for individual leave quantities.
- The pharmacy may provide an appropriate quantity of each medication separately packaged and labeled for a resident who attends school or a sheltered workshop. This supply may be sent with the resident and returned daily or maintained at the school or workshop. The facility is responsible to assure that medications are stored and administered properly at the school or workshop.