

## 3.5 MEDICATION POLICIES

### **Overview:**

Many of the children and adults we serve have medications or treatments prescribed by their physician or medical specialist. We must ensure the safe and conscientious administration of medications to those we support.

BACI is responsible to ensure that:

- Medications are stored securely
- Medications are dispensed safely and according to the physician's directions
- Our medication administration procedures shall be in accordance with the provincial Residential Care Regulations and/or applicable licensing guidelines
- Medications, both prescription and non-prescription, cannot be administered unless prescribed by a doctor.

### **Medication Administration Policy:**

It is an employee or support person's responsibility to dispense medications as prescribed by a physician. It is not within an employee or support person's **jurisdiction** to make judgments about what a physician has prescribed. Even a seemingly harmless non-prescription medication may have a potentially dangerous effect when combined with other medications that an individual is using. Therefore, even alternative therapies, such as homeopathic or herbal remedies, cannot be administered without a doctor's written order.

A doctor's order includes the original label from the pharmacy on the Medication Administration Record (MAR) sheet. Verbal orders from a physician are not acceptable. The only exemption from the requirement of a physician's written permission for the administration of medication is that the medication is part of Emergency First Aid.

Self-Administering of medications may only occur with a doctor's written permission and a protocol in place for monitoring and recording use of the medication and in licensed facilities, a variance from licensing. The self-administered medications must be kept in a secure place.

No changes may be made to medication labels. No "white-out" can be used in medical records. Highlighting is allowed.

### **Misuse of Medication Policy:**

The taking of any individual's medication or medication, which was to be returned to the pharmacy, shall be viewed as theft, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or termination of a contract (where applicable).

The administration of prescription medications to a individual without proper authorization by a physician, or the administration of non-prescription medications in a manner inconsistent with BACI policy and protocols shall be viewed as abuse, and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or termination of a contract (where applicable)

### **Medication Errors Policy:**

The following addresses medication errors made by BACI employees:

All medication errors will be reviewed, because of the potentially critical consequences. As a general rule: the **first error** will result in a verbal warning, the **second error** will result in a written warning, and the **third error** will result in a disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

It is recognized some errors are beyond the control of staff and may not result in discipline. Other errors of a more serious nature, however, can result in initial discipline being more severe and may be up to and including dismissal.

### **Medication Incident Reports**

A **Critical Incident Report** is to be completed when:

- A person in care requires emergency care by a physician or transfer to hospital;
- Where the incorrect medication is given to a person in care;
- Administering medication has been forgotten - not given within 1 hour of dosage time;
- Medication is lost;
- Old or discontinued medications are disposed of;
- Medications are punched out of the wrong date on the bubble pack;
- Employee has forgotten to sign for medication during their shift;
- The "extra" medication at the end of the bubble pack is used;
- The individual refuses to take a medication.

The person who discovers a medication error as described above is responsible for completing the Critical Incident Report. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring the incident report is forwarded to the Manager of the department for review and then to the appropriate agencies.

The employee who discovers that a medication that was to be administered has not been signed for in the M.A.R. must make efforts to confirm whether the medication has been administered. These efforts are:

- telephoning the employees who were present;
- observing the bubble-pack card to see if the medication that was to be given is still there; and
- observing who, if anyone, initialed the bubble-pack card.

The employee who discovers that the M.A.R. has not been appropriately initialed is to complete an Incident Report. The ability of staff to dispense medications correctly is a basic job requirement and failure to do so has serious health and safety impact for residents and legal implications for BACI.