

Bulletin #2- April, 2017

Administering Medications – Options for Facilitating Social Inclusion

Background and Introduction

In an effort to promote integration and inclusion in community activities, individuals with ID are encouraged and supported to be involved in a variety of situations which take them outside of their home setting. While this is a very desirable outcome, concern has sometimes been raised about how the necessity to have medications administered at a certain time, may interfere with community outings or natural interactions. While it is true that individuals may take a number of different medications which, at first glance, may appear to need to be given at a specific time, this should not prevent an individual from involvement in community activities. Below is an explanation of Medication Administration (MAP) requirements as well as some practical “common sense” guidance regarding how one can balance the need for medications with the desirability for involvement in community activities.

Medication Administration Regulations/Practice;

Currently, if an individual is not independent in the administration of their own medications, the medications are administered by medication Administration Program (MAP) Certified staff working for a MAP Registered site. If MAP Certified staff are out in the community with an individual at a time when medications need to be administered, they can package the medications and administer them to the individual and then document the administration when they return to the MAP registered program. If the individual is not being accompanied by staff assigned to the program but rather a friend or family, the medications can be prepared as Leave of Absence (LOA) medications and given to the accompanying person to administer according to the directions provided with the medications.

If the individual is being accompanied by a staff person who is not MAP Certified, the medications cannot be prepared in either way. The medication time for that one specific time period may need to be changed to accommodate the outing as long as the Health Care Provider (HCP) did not order the medication to be given at a specific time like 8pm. The MAP Consultant should be contacted in advance of the outing to determine whether this can be done.

Practical Guidance to Address Medication Administration and Community Involvement

There are several MAP policies in place that can be used to address this issue. The prepackaging and LOA policies mentioned above are usually all that is needed to address how medications can be administered when away from home or day program. Anticipating an outing whenever possible can also allow time to contact the MAP Consultant and or the HCP to make adjustments to medication administration times if that is the best or only option. Staff have 1 hour either side of the assigned medication time to administer the medication (a two hour

window) and that leeway is often adequate to offset any late or early administration needs.

If an individual needs to take a medication during work hours at a competitive employment location or has to take medications with their food and there is no MAP Certified staff or friends/family to administer it, perhaps consideration should be given to teaching the individual to self-administer only that medication if possible.