POLICY

It is the policy of this Community to inform physicians regarding changes in their patients' (our residents') conditions, abnormalities in medication administration and any accident or incident that might result in a resident needing medical attention.

PROCEDURES

The Community will maintain written documentation of all communications with physicians, and place a copy in the residents’ records.

Written Communication

Written communication allows the Community to receive a signed order or instructions from the physician immediately, when the physician returns a fax. The faxed Community/Physician Communication form allows the Community to keep the physician informed of minor changes and general information.

- **State the reason for notification:** e.g., “This is to notify you of a change in the Resident’s condition,” “This is to notify you of a non-injury fall,” “This is to notify you of a delay in delivery of medication,” etc.

- **Include information indicating observations and/or facts that will assist the physician in making recommendations as needed or requested:** e.g., “No observable injury,” “No new complaints of pain,” “Vital signs taken after the fall are…” “Continues to complain of pain with new medication,” “Continues to experience anxiety in the evening, but is no longer easily distracted,” etc.

- **State what has been done or will be done in response to the issue requiring notification:** e.g., “…has been placed on alert charting,” “…has been using PRN standing order Tylenol with effective relief from pain,” “pressure has been taken weekly with the following results,” “…interventions of this behavior have been reviewed and updated,” etc.

- **State very clearly if further instructions are needed.**

- **State the needed time frame for a response:** e.g., an FYI fax would not necessitate a response from the MD.
• Document in the Resident’s progress notes the reason the fax was sent and the return instructions.

• If the Community/Physician Communication form is received with an order, fax the form to the pharmacy and treat it as a new order.

• Fire the Community/Physician Communication form under the Physician Orders tab in the resident record.

**Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication allows the Community communicate with the Resident’s physician in an emergent or urgent situation, when immediate instructions are necessary.

• Have the Resident’s information, including vital signs, ready.

• Be prepared to tell the physician the other medications the Resident is taking, the Resident’s code status and the phone number of the pharmacy.

• In the event that the physician recommends a change in the Resident’s current medication or gives a new order, alert him or her that the Community is unable to accept verbal orders, and have the telephone and fax numbers of the Resident’s pharmacy available; the pharmacy will not fill a prescription or change the MAR without a signed physician’s order.

• State your observations clearly and slowly.

• Remain calm when speaking; try to have another person listen to the conversation for verification.

• If the physician recommends any changes in medications, ask for clarification of the parameters for giving any medication, whether routine or PRN, as follows:
  
  o The condition or symptom(s) for each new medication;
  o The expected outcome and a timeframe in which symptoms should resolve; and
  o The symptoms of the condition or side effects of the medication that determine when to call the physician again.

• Document what the physician said and fax it to the physician for signature immediately following the conversation.