Residential Care Services (RCS)  
Operational Principles and Procedures for  
Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs)  
FULL INSPECTION  

MEDICATION SERVICES

I. Purpose  
To provide the licensor with an overview of the assisted living facility (ALF) medication service system.

II. Authority  
RCW 18.20.110  
RCW 18.20.160  
RCW 18.20.230  
RCW 18.20.270  
RCW 18.20.330

III. Operational Principles  
A. The medication service task incorporates observations, interviews and record review to ensure the ALF has developed and implemented a medication system that promotes the safe delivery of medications for all residents.

B. Observations and data collection regarding medications are resident outcome oriented, focusing on medication storage, medication delivery system and respect for resident rights.

IV. Procedures  
The Licensor will:  
A. Make general observations of medication services throughout the inspection.

B. Conduct focused observations, interviews and record review regarding medication services for other sample residents (focused sample), if necessary related to medication services identified during:  
1. Informal interview/conversations,  
2. Observations, and  
3. Data collected during a records review.  

NOTE: If there is a potential or actual resident negative outcome identified regarding delivery of medications, a registered nurse licensor will conduct formal medication pass observations.

C. Conduct interviews with contacts including outside the ALF regarding medication services if further data needed to verify non-compliance.

D. Document findings on appropriate forms (Attachments: A, D, G, H, I, J, L, and Q).

V. Information and Assistance  
A. Medication services data collection is resident outcome focused and includes review of:  
1. Medication storage: safety, labeling, organizers.

2. Medication delivery system: documentation, assistance/administration, alterations, appropriate for resident needs.
3. Medication prescriptions received timely.
4. Respect of resident rights: right to refuse, individual choice and preference.
5. Disposal of medications.

B. Identify residents for medication services task by doing the following:
   1. Identifying and documenting any medication issues from the pre-inspection preparation.
   2. Selecting sample residents that include the range of medication services provided by the ALF.
   3. Reviewing the resident characteristic roster/sample selection (Attachment D) and identifying residents self-administering medication, or receiving medication administration and noting if nurse delegation is provided.
   4. Reviewing resident characteristic roster/sample selection (Attachment D) and identifying any sample residents with AL, EARC or EARC-SDC contracts receiving medication assistance or administration. ALF must provide medication administration for contracted residents that need that service.
   5. Identifying if the ALF provides for family assistance or administration with medications.

C. Observe medication storage area during tour and at other times during the inspection for the following:
   1. Medications are secure for residents not capable of self-storage;
   2. Medication is properly labeled;
   3. Medications for a specific resident are stored together and are kept separate from other resident medications and/or food or toxic chemicals;
   4. Storage area is locked, accessible only to designated, responsible staff; and
   5. Medications are stored according to medication label recommendations, (example: KEEP REFRIGERATED).

D. Throughout the inspection conduct informal observations of staff during medication assist/administration for:
   1. Staff knowledge and technique;
   2. Staff to resident interaction for communication with residents; and
   3. Level of medication assistance and administration is appropriate.

E. In-depth review of medication systems for residents selected for review.
   1. Interview residents regarding medication services and observe residents for level of ability and appropriateness of services.
   2. Conduct interviews with staff to address medication storage with residents, including:
      a. System for controlling and securing medications for residents assessed to be capable of self-administration or self-administration with assistance; and
      b. Use of medication organizers.
   3. Observe resident room during interview for medication issues such as medications on floor or inappropriately stored, such that residents may gain access to another resident’s medications.
4. Review medication records for sample residents with medication assistance or administration, noting any documentation of refusal and/or no availability of medications, if the physician was notified of the refusal, and appropriate action was taken if there was a pattern of refusal.

5. Identify if any sample resident receives nurse delegation for medication services. For these residents, interview staff regarding nurse delegation practices for the resident.

6. Conduct resident record review noting if the negotiated service agreement addresses medication plan for residents receiving assistance or administration (intermittent nursing services), and any significant changes that impact the medication services for the resident.

F. When issues are identified regarding the delivery of medications with potential or actual resident negative outcome (see IV. D.), a registered nurse licensor will conduct formal observations of a medication pass including:
   1. Compare observations with the prescriber’s orders.
   2. Review the medication records for accuracy and completeness.
   3. Review if the ALF reconciles and secures controlled medications.
   4. Observe whether staff confirmed the resident’s identity prior to giving medications.
   5. Record procedures staff use to handle and administer medications, such as, flushing gastric tubes, crushing medications, diabetic insulin.
   6. Identify medications not being given in a timely manner; such as antibiotics and pain medications.
   7. Review how emergency medication issues are handled. If a resident is out of medication, what does the facility do to obtain in a timely manner?

G. If issues or outcomes are identified regarding medication services during interviews and observations, reconcile medications with the logs for documentation of residents receiving medications and supplements as ordered and note findings.

H. Expand the sample to include supplemental residents if an issue or concern specific to medication services is identified additional reviews are necessary to make an informed decision. This may include interviews with other residents, staff, family members, and review of ALF policies and procedures.

I. Contact the Field Manager to determine if a nurse needs to join the team to complete the medication review, observe medication pass, or if an issue or discrepancy is identified.

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Date