



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
WASHINGTON STATE NURSING CARE QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION
P.O. Box 47864 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7864

**Oral Medication Error Reporting in Schools, Public and Private, K-12
Guidance from the Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance
Commission
May, 2001**

Policy Statement: The purpose of this policy is to ensure safe oral medication administration in the school systems. The correct oral medications must be administered to the correct student at the correct time, in the dosage prescribed, by the correct route. Deviation from this standard may constitute a medication error. A dose that is missed (omitted), for whatever reason, may also be considered a medication error. All medication errors must be documented and reported to the nurse who provides supervision for school staff giving the oral medications for the school under RCW 28A.210.260 and 270. Analysis of the reports will be completed at least annually to determine any systems modifications that are necessary. This analysis will be reported to the school building administrator and forwarded to the district administration with recommendations.

Process

1. The supervising nurse, using clinical judgment, will determine the level of severity of the medication error. Serious errors must be reported immediately to the supervising nurse.
2. All errors must be documented and reported to the supervising nurse for the school within 24 hours.
3. Counting of controlled substances is highly recommended according to the Administration of Medications in Schools Bulletin No. 34-01 Learning and Teaching Support. On weekly medication counts, the nurse needs to have assistance and a witness to the actual count of the medications.

4. If the error is committed by a credentialed provider, and causes bodily harm or injury to the student, or causes the student to be seen by emergency services, the incident must be reported by the supervising nurse to

- The school administrator
- Parents and/or guardians
- The Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission, according to WAC 246-840-730. The Nursing Commission can be contacted at:

Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission
Department of Health
PO Box 47864
Olympia WA 98504-7864
(360) 236-4702

5. If the error is committed by an unlicensed school employee and causes bodily harm or injury to the student, or causes the student to be seen by emergency services, the incident must be reported to the school administrator and the parents and/or guardian by the supervising nurse. The incident may be reportable to the Department of Health, unlicensed practice unit. This may be subject to administrative actions or - fines. To contact the unlicensed practice unit, please send inquiries to:

Unlicensed Practice Program Manager
Department of Health
PO Box 47874
Olympia WA 98504-7874
(360) 236-4659

6. All actions taken as a result of the medication error are to be documented on the written report.

7. Theft or suspected theft is to be documented and reported to the supervising nurse. Theft or suspected theft is also reportable to local law enforcement.

8. Medication error reports will be maintained for eight years after the incident (RCW 4.16.350). The reports will be used by the supervising nurse to

- Determine trends and patterns in medication errors,
- Assist in identification of educational and resource needs of licensed and unlicensed staff, and
- Record circumstances contributing to the error and actions taken as a result of the error.

9. The supervising nurse may assess the results of actions taken in response to medication errors.