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Division of Welfare

Bureau of Facility Standards

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INFORMATIONAL LETTER #93-1

DATE: February 17, 1993

TO: ALL LONG TERM CARE ADMINISTRATORS

FROM: Jean Schoonover, R.N., Chief
Bureau of Facility Standards

SUBJECT: Medication Distribution System

During the last year, there has been some confusion regarding the medication distribution system allowed in Long Term Care Facilities in Idaho.

This has resulted in part because of the passage of new pharmacy regulations that require all long term care (LTC) facilities to utilize a unit dose or a modified unit dose system that allows no more that an eight (8) day supply of medication in the facility.

The new pharmacy regulation "Pharmacy Practices in Institutions" Regulation 600 J.i.(d) states:

j. DRUGS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCE

(d) All drugs in oral solid dosage form supplied to a licensed skilled nursing care facility shall be limited to no more than an eight day supply except where USP indicates the drug shall be dispensed in the original container. Automatic refilling of medications is prohibited, except where unit dose is used in a daily delivery system. Any continuation of medications must be reordered by the licensed skilled nursing care facility pursuant to a current physician's order. Effective January 1, 1992 (Amended 11/20/91)

Please note that this regulation addresses all medications provided to the facility and includes over the counter medications.

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Title 3 Chapter 2, *Rules and Minimum Standards for Skilled Nursing and Intermediate Care Facilities in Idaho*, section 16.03.02201,05 addresses Unit Dose Pharmacy in LTC facilities. Because of the new pharmacy regulation, either the unit dose or the customized medication packaging system that allows no more that an eight (8) day supply must now be utilized in all LTC facilities.

The only exceptions to these regulations are residents who receive medication from the Veterans' Administration and those medications provided through the Railroad Retirement System, or if there is a pharmacy in-house dispensing medications in individual bottles of no more than a thirty (30) day supply.

Please note that medications obtained from AARP have not been included in the exception.

During recent inspections, surveyors have identified several facilities that are mixing systems; i.e., unit dose, bulk or modified punch cards. This enhances the possibility of medication error and is a violation of LTC regulations. Each facility must identify the system that will be used throughout the facility and use it consistently for all medications provided, if possible.

Questions regarding medication distribution systems can be forwarded to the LTC supervisor at 334-6626 or to the Board of Pharmacy.

Jean Schoonover

Jean Schoonover, R.N., Chief
Bureau of Facility Standards

JS/tm

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