



## **Special Olympic Pennsylvania Best Practices for Medication Assistance**

Pennsylvania does not license medication aides or have qualifications for medication aides. It appears that unlicensed (non-relative) individuals may provide assistance to individuals with taking their prescribed medication. Below is a summary of best practices in providing such assistance.

### **Levels of Assistance**

Athletes with full independence are those who take responsibility for administration of their own prescribed medications while in their home environment and on a regular basis. The Medication Assistance Consent Form is not needed for these individuals. Fully independent athletes will keep and self-administer their own medication during training and events. Class A Volunteers are not responsible for providing any assistance, including storing medication.

Certain athletes, with intellectual disabilities, may obtain assistance from Class A Volunteers with taking their prescribed medication during events. To obtain assistance, the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s) should complete the Medication Assistance Consent Form to describe the scope of the assistance required. This process is also necessary to obtain written consent from the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s). Below are the levels of assistance:

- **Some Supervision/Assistance** – applies to athletes who require assistance with any of the following: removing medication from the original container; preparing the medication as ordered by the prescriber; and remembering the schedule for taking the medication. Class A Volunteers will provide assistance based on the needs of the individual, including offering the individual the medication at the prescribed times, opening a medication container, and storing the medication in a secure place. In essence, the Class A Volunteers are assisting the athlete with his/her medication self-administration.
- **Full Assistance** – applies to athletes who are unable to recognize their medication, know how much medication is to be taken, or know when the medication is to be taken. Class A Volunteers are responsible for storing and assisting the athlete in taking the correct medication in the correct dose at the correct time.

The Medication Assistance Consent Form should be completed by the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s) and record information about dosage/level of assistance/method of administration/timing and other key elements of medication assistance. Class A Volunteers should confirm that the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s) provided enough medication for the duration of the competition. Where possible, medication should be provided in the original prescription container as dispensed (*e.g.*, labelled prescription bottle, blister pack). An athlete's medication(s) should be stored together with the Medication Assistance Consent Form and Medication Assistance Tracker (*e.g.*, in a plastic bag that indicates the athlete's name).



## **Medication Assistance**

During the events, Class A Volunteers should track any and all medication taken by Some Supervision/Assistance and Full Assistance athletes using the Medication Assistance Tracker. Volunteer Coaches should record the date, time, medication name, and amount of medication provided as well as any relevant comments (*e.g.*, taken with yogurt). The Volunteer Coach should include his/her initials for each administration. Medication Assistance Trackers should be provided to the Special Olympics Pennsylvania staff at the end of the events.

Class A Volunteers are responsible for holding and storing medication for Some Supervision/Assistance and Full Assistance athletes. Storage instructions recorded on the Medication Assistance Consent Form should be followed, including any requirements to keep medication close at hand (*e.g.*, EpiPens).

In the event of an emergency or adverse reaction requiring medical knowledge, Class A Volunteers should not attempt to assess treatment and/or medication needs. Rather, the Class A Volunteer should immediately contact the 911, Special Olympic Pennsylvania staff, and/or any emergency contact provided by the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s).

If an athlete's medication administration requires specific medical knowledge to administer, the Class A Volunteer should not assume responsibility for providing assistance. Such athletes should be accompanied by a medical professional and/or parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s).

## **Controlled Substances**

Controlled substances are drugs that have varying degrees of potential for abuse or dependence. Pennsylvania considers drugs such as morphine, clonazepam, and diazepam to be controlled substances. Possession of a controlled substance is restricted by state law and potentially subject to criminal and civil liability. However, Pennsylvania permits the possession of a controlled substance obtained directly from, or pursuant to, a valid prescription order.

Controlled substances taken by the athletes should be listed on the Medication Assistance Consent Form. If an athlete requires Some Supervision/Assistance or Full Assistance with a controlled substance, the Class A Volunteer should ensure that the controlled substances are in their original packaging and should obtain and keep a copy of the athlete's prescription on hand. Prescription copies should be provided to the Special Olympics Pennsylvania staff at the end of the events along with the Medication Tracker.

Given the heightened scrutiny surrounding controlled substances, Class A Volunteers should carefully record and account for the amount of controlled substance received, administered, and returned using the Medication Assistance Tracker. If any controlled substances are not used and need to be returned to the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s), the Class A Volunteer should record the amount returned. If the medication cannot be returned, Class A Volunteers should give the unused medication to the Special Olympics Pennsylvania staff.