

**DIVISION OF HOME HEALTH
TECHNICAL ADVISORY**

The Department has received inquiries concerning home care agencies and home care registries, added by Act 69 of 2006 to the list of health care facilities required to be licensed by the Department under Health Care Facilities Act, and the types of services licensed agencies and registries can provide to consumers. This advisory is intended to clarify permitted home care services.

Agencies and registries supply or refer direct care workers to provide home care services to individuals in their homes or other independent living environment. Home care services include personal care, assistance with instrumental activities of daily living, companionship services, respite care and specialized care.

Personal care includes assistance with self-administration of medications. Direct care workers can assist with self-administration of medication for consumers who are competent to direct the care. Assistance with self-administration of medication includes assisting the consumer in locating an oral medication container, opening the container and retrieving the correct dosage, as directed by the consumer, and assisting the consumer with taking the medication. Assistance with self-administration of medication also includes applying a topical medicated cream as directed by the consumer.

Direct care workers who are not licensed health professionals cannot administer medications. Administration of a medication includes:

- obtaining an order for a medication from a licensed health care professional with prescriptive authority
- checking a medication order for necessary components
- verifying that the medication is the right medication, is labeled correctly, has not expired and has no contraindications
- verifying the dose, route and time for medication administration
- exercising judgment; e.g. deciding if an adverse reaction has occurred, if medication should be halted, or the if consultation with the prescriber is necessary

A licensed practical nurse or registered nurse employed by a home care agency or home care registry to provide home care services may perform services within the scope of her/her license; however, the nurse may not delegate nursing functions to an unlicensed direct care worker or train or supervise the direct care worker in the performance of a nursing function. For example, a direct care worker may not do tube feedings or provide wound care.