



INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 20, 2004

TO: County Health Department Directors/Administrators
Public School District Superintendents

FROM: John O. Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A., M.P.H.
Secretary, Department of Health

SUBJECT: Policy on Sliding Scale Insulin in Schools

**ACTION
REQUIRED:** Implement Policy Effective Immediately

The adjustment of insulin during the school day has become an important part of the management of children with diabetes. Several inquiries have been made about whether nurses or their delegates can accept orders from prescribing practitioners directing nurses to accept sliding scale orders from parents. This is to remind you of the statutory language governing the practice of nursing in Florida.

The Nurse Practice Act defines the professional practice of nursing to include “[t]he administration of medications and treatments as prescribed or authorized by a duly licensed practitioner authorized by the laws of this state to prescribe such medications and treatments,” As stated in section 464.003(3)(a)2., *Florida Statutes*. The practice of practical nursing is defined to include “the performance of selected acts, including the administration of treatments and medications, . . . under the direction of a registered nurse, a licensed physician, a licensed osteopathic physician, a licensed podiatric physician, or a licensed dentist,” according to section 464.003(3)(b), *Florida Statutes*. Based upon these requirements, it is the policy of the Department of Health that school nurses take insulin orders only from duly licensed medical practitioners.

Because it is not always possible to reach the prescribing practitioner for consultation, the department recommends that the prescribing practitioner provide written sliding scale orders to the school nurse for any student requiring insulin administration during the school day. The requirement for written orders to the school nurse does not preclude involving the parents in the care of their children. Parents should also have knowledge and copies of the sliding scale orders. As required for all school children with a chronic health condition, the school nurse, in conjunction with the parents, must develop an individual healthcare plan for the student.

There are multiple options for the care plans. Among these are:

- The parents may administer the insulin and any changes themselves;
- The parents may work directly with children who self administer their insulin to adjust dosage; or,

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- The nurse may be asked to call the parent when adjustments are indicated to alert them to the needed change and make changes in accordance with the standing order.

Other options may also be developed.

To address this complex issue, a policy and guide have been developed. The Internal Operating Policy (School Health 1) and Technical Assistance Guide (TA-School Health 1) are located on the School Health web site as follows:

INTRANET - School Health Page (DOH Internal Website):

<http://dohiws.doh.state.fl.us/Divisions/Family_Health/schoolhealth/index.html>

INTERNET - School District Internet Folder (Limited Access):

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/school/attachments/sh_index.htm>

Please implement this policy effective immediately. If you have any questions, please contact the School Health staff at (850) 245-4445 or SUNCOM 205-4445.

cc: School Health Coordinators
County Health Departments
School District Coordinators
County School Districts
Mary Jo Butler
Department of Education