

RN Novel Delegation Decision Support Tool

Problem statement: School nurses and Child Care Health Consultants are increasingly being asked to administer complementary and alternative therapies and medications in school, before and after school programs, and camp settings. This includes medical products or practices that are used together with (complementary) or instead of (alternative) standard medical care. Usually, less is known about complementary and alternative medicine than about standard treatments, which go through a long and careful research process to prove they are safe and effective. Complementary and alternative medicine may include dietary supplements, megadose vitamins, herbal preparations, special teas, acupuncture, massage therapy, magnet therapy, spiritual healing, and meditation.

Emerging therapies that may not be evidence-based for the pediatric population continue to pop up in the above settings. Some resources do exist to help school health professionals assess the safety and efficacy in determining if the emerging therapy and/or medications can be delegated in these settings. This document is meant to be a tool to help school health professionals determine whether use of and delegation in a group care setting is appropriate. These will all be referred to as therapies- this would include nursing tasks, medications, and non-pharmacological interventions.

- **Step 1: Contact your Health Services Director about the request.**
- **Step 2: Contact the primary care provider and/or prescribing provider** (ideally these are the same). Consider asking these questions:
 - What is the specific purpose/treatment goal of this therapy?
 - Has the therapy been effective in meeting the treatment goal of this particular student/patient?
 - How long has the student been using this therapy?
 - How imperative is it that this therapy be provided (at school, on a field trip, etc..) given the risk for medication error in this setting?
 - Have there been any safety concerns for this therapy for this student/patient?
 - Has the prescribing provider ensured that there aren't any potential harmful interactions between the therapy (therapies) and other prescription medications that the student/patient is taking?
 - Is this an evidence-based practice?
- **Step 3: If there is a subject matter expert on your team, reach out to them.**
- **Step 4: If the decision isn't clear after contacting the primary care provider/prescribing provider or if assistance is needed in communicating with the primary care provider/prescribing provider, contact your Health Services Supervisor.**
- **Step 5: Do background research on safety and efficacy of therapy.** Note that data on safety and efficacy may be limited in many cases.
 - **Use your medication reference manual, if available.**
 - Evaluate for if there is off-label use and determine FDA approval status
- **Step 6: Use the grid below to guide assessment of safety and efficacy.**

| |  Efficacy  | |
|---|---|--|
| | High | Low |
|  Safety  | <p>Evidence supports both safety and efficacy</p> <p>The natural product should fall within the standard of care and present limited risk to patients</p> <p>The clinical pharmacist may recommend the product but should continue to monitor its safety and efficacy</p> | <p>Evidence supports safety, but evidence regarding efficacy is inconclusive</p> <p>The natural product does not fall within the standard of care; however, it likely presents minimal risk to patients</p> <p>The clinical pharmacist may not specifically recommend taking this product; however, the pharmacist should urge caution and closely monitor it for efficacy</p> |
| | <p>Evidence supports efficacy, but data regarding safety are inconclusive</p> <p>The natural product may potentially be viewed as a cause of patient injury; however, if the product presents a low risk of harm, it may be acceptable to use, depending on its level of efficacy</p> <p>The clinical pharmacist should consider tolerating a patient taking this natural product, urge caution, and closely monitor for safety</p> | <p>Evidence indicates serious risk or inefficacy</p> <p>The natural product is ineffective or may pose serious harm to the patient</p> <p>The clinical pharmacist should avoid recommending, and actively discourage patients from using, this natural product</p> |

From: ACCP White Paper on Natural Products; *Pharmacotherapy* 2017

- **Step 7: Based on safety and efficacy assessment, determine where alternative therapy fits on the ‘Alternative Therapy in Schools’ grid below.** Note that this safety and efficacy assessment may be based in part on the primary care physician’s/prescribing physician’s assessment for that individual patient/student and on the length of time that the patient/student has been using the therapy:

| | High Efficacy | Low Efficacy/Efficacy Not Known |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Acceptable Safety | Reasonable to give at school Only therapies that are considered Acceptable Safety and High Efficacy should be given on field trips | Reasonable to give at school as long as burden on school staff and/or school RN is not too high—Does the nurse have time to assess, train, and delegate this therapy? Does the delegatee have the time to safely administer this therapy? |
| Safety Not Known | May be reasonable to give at school but requires: -- discussion with student’s medical provider, School Health Services Director --continued monitoring for safety | Do not give at school |