

August 5, 2015

To: Washington State Nursing and Pharmacy Stakeholders

Re: Use of Automated Drug Distribution Devices by nursing students

The Washington State Nursing Care and the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commissions have recently completed work regarding the use of Automated Drug Distribution Devices (ADDDs) by students enrolled in a Nursing Commission approved nursing program. As a result of extensive work done by a special joint task force, recommendations were adopted by both commissions during their regular business meetings this summer.

The commissions agreed that nursing students must have access to all medication distribution systems. The following are the guidelines for nursing programs, healthcare facilities, and pharmacies to use when nursing students access ADDDs:

1. Nursing programs must provide students with orientation and practice experiences that include demonstration of competency of skills prior to utilizing medication distribution systems;
2. Nursing programs, healthcare facilities, and pharmacies must provide adequate training for students accessing ADDDs; and
3. Nursing programs, healthcare facilities, and pharmacies must have written policies and procedures for the following:
 - (a) Access and administration of medications by nursing students based on student competencies,
 - (b) Orientation of students and faculty to policies and procedures related to medication administration and distribution systems, and
 - (c) Reporting of student medication errors, near misses and alleged diversion.

Students in Nursing Commission approved nursing programs are allowed access to all medication distribution systems. All nursing programs, healthcare facilities, and pharmacies must have policies and procedures for nursing students to provide medication administration safely. Nursing and Pharmacy rules will be amended to include these approved guidelines.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Cathy Williams at cathleen.williams@doh.wa.gov or Mindy Schaffner at mindy.schaffner@doh.wa.gov

Sincerely,

/S/

Paula R. Meyer, MSN, RN, FRE
NCQAC Executive Director

/S/

Christopher Humberson, R.Ph.
PQAC Executive Director