

Mail Order Pharmacy and Assisted Living

Some Medicare Part D and other insurance may require residents to use a mail order pharmacy. In some cases, residents may want to use a mail order pharmacy. Use of a mail order pharmacy raises some questions for providers. The following document addresses some of those questions.

Can a resident choose a mail order pharmacy?

Residents in assisted living generally have a right to choose their own pharmacy. That pharmacy can be mail order. DQA memo 05-002 does provide some guidance about the freedom to choose a pharmacy.

Who is responsible to make sure the medications come from the mail order pharmacy timely?

In assisted living, a resident will receive a range of services. In some cases, the resident is completely independent and is responsible for obtaining medications. In other cases, the facility takes on the responsibility for managing medications including making arrangements for obtaining the medications.

What are you suppose to do if the medications are ordered from the mail order pharmacy and they do not arrive in time and the resident has no medication to take?

When medications are routinely obtained from mail order pharmacies, residents and facilities need to have a process in place to make sure medications are ordered on a timely basis. When medications from the mail order pharmacy are delayed, a process needs to be in place to obtain medications so that there is no break in therapy.

We are a CBRF that has no nurse and therefore are required to have unit of use packaging. However, the mail order pharmacy will not package medications this way. What do we do?

In some cases, a local pharmacy will be willing to repackage the medications in the packaging that is required. In other cases, DQA memo 04-006 (Medication Set up in Assisted Living) provides guidance on the ability for the assisted living facility to repackage medications. When these two options are not available, the resident is left with making the choice of changing their pharmacy or finding another facility in which to reside.