

MEMO

TO: All nursing homes, home health, rest homes
FROM:
DATE:
RE: Use of facsimile machines

We appreciate your care of our patients. To that end, we have all witnessed an explosion of ways of communication and contacting the physician. Because of this, different care providers in different facilities have chosen a multitude of ways of communicating directly and indirectly with the physician. There has been a continued plethora of faxes that might be called "fax-o-rrhea." From our vantage point, we wanted to give you some guidelines on the use of faxes.

- 1) Faxes sent to offices are NOT CONFIDENTIAL – the bin in which they are received is used by all staff. Please consider this in use of faxes.
- 2) Faxes are NEVER URGENT – the response time should be considered to be several hours to anywhere from 24-48 hours. If the need is more urgent, call the physician (or the physician covering for him/her).
- 3) Have your own internal way of making sure that faxes are followed up within 1-2 business days (if a response is needed). You cannot be assured that a fax is received clearly or at all. There is always the possibility the fax was misplaced, lost or given to the wrong person. DON'T SEND REPEATED FAXES for the same problem. If one form of communication isn't working, don't keep using it – call or page the MD, as appropriate and depending on the urgency.
- 4) Make sure your needs for a response are clear. If it is an FYI, make sure it is just this. If the MD needs to respond and an order is given, a fax is adequate as an order, and you do not have to rewrite the order in another area of the chart for repeat signature. This is a waste of everyone's effort.
- 5) Help make sure that you give enough information so the MD can make a good decision or give the appropriate order. For instance, if you are faxing an elevated glucose, here is how you might do that:

"Dr. Smith, Glucose 310 this AM. Usually runs in 140-150 range QAM. Vital signs stable and in no distress. No obvious infection by nursing assessment. Present Insulin is Humulin 70/30 35 Units SQ in AM and 20 Units SQ in PM. Please respond with change in dosage by fax or call within 24h. Consider F/U lab. Thanks"

Remember, spending a little more time informing the doctor will save time later.

Also, attached is a suggested Fax Form Format that will provide consistency and reduce errors as much as possible. Consistency is very important. However, space at the top is available to add your logo, address and contact numbers and fax numbers as appropriate.

We, again, appreciate what you do and we look forward to improved communication with you.

Date: _____ **Number of pages (including cover):** _____

SENT TO: Name: _____

Company: _____

Phone number: _____

Fax number: _____

SENT BY: Name: _____

FYI – No response needed

Response needed – Not urgent

Drug Allergies and/or Sensitivities (required)

DESCRIPTION or REQUEST

MD RESPONSE Note: If an order(s) is given below, save in the chart as a part of the patient's record.

MD signature _____ **Date** _____

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: Any documents accompanying this facsimile transmission may contain legally or medically privileged confidential information. This information is intended only for the individual or entity named above. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any reading, copying, disclosure, distribution or retransmission is expressly prohibited. The taking of any action in reliance on the contents of this telecopied information is strictly prohibited. If you have received this telecopy in error, please notify this office/facility immediately to arrange for the return of the received documents to this office.

REMINDER: Respect patient confidentiality per Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.