

# Grant & Per Diem (GPD) National Program Office: Medication Storage & Access to Medications VHA Homeless Programs Office

This document addresses frequently asked questions related to GPD regulations on medication storage and access to medications in GPD projects.

*This document is for distribution to GPD grantees.*

## MEDICATION STORAGE FAQs

### **What are the requirements for storage and access to emergency medications in GPD projects?**

Emergency medications must be maintained either on the Veteran's person or by the Veteran's bedside. The Veteran must have quick seamless access to these medications.

### **What is an emergency medication?**

Emergency medications are those that if not used within a relatively short period of time would increase the risk of death or disability for the Veteran. These medications have a low likelihood of resulting in death by overdose should they be used by the Veteran or someone else. Examples are:

- Naloxone
- Rescue inhalers for COPD and asthma
- EpiPen
- Glucose oral gel
- Glucagon injectable
- Nitroglycerin sublingual

### **How are non-emergency medications in GPD projects expected to be stored?**

Secured storage should include the ability to limit access to the medication to the Veteran (i.e. lockable with access by only the Veteran and/or staff). In addition, secured storage must not be easily removed (i.e. lock boxes that are mounted, use of storage lockers, footlocker with locks, dressers with locks).

### **What are some examples of how grantees can provide and ensure secure storage of medications?**

- File cabinets or lockers that are either secured to the wall or are large enough that they could not be easily removed and carried out of the building OR a locked room or unit door
- In single room occupancy or apartment units, making sure only the Veteran and staff have access and the Veteran receives regular education about the importance of locking the door.
- If there is a shared room situation and there are lockers or a file cabinet where meds are stored, educating the Veterans on making sure they lock their locker or cabinet on a regular basis.

- The GPD Program Office does *not* require two locking systems (such as must have locking cabinet (1) in addition to locked door (2) in apartment style or single room occupancy situation), **but some nurses do require this based on their training standards.**

#### **Is there anything the GPD grantees need to do regarding this guidance?**

- If the grantee has any internal policies or procedures regarding medication storage and/or access to medications, these should be reviewed and updated as necessary.
- As always, the grantee should provide education to the Veterans on the importance of locking their room or unit doors and/or cabinets or lockers.
- If the grantee keeps all medications stored in a central location with controlled access, the grantee should provide the emergency medications prescribed to the Veteran so that the Veteran can maintain them on person or by bedside.

#### **What are some best practices for medication storage and access in GPD projects?**

- It is recommended that the grantee requests a list of Veteran's prescribed medications at intake and on a periodic basis thereafter.
- Performing intermittent door lock checks by testing if Veterans' room or unit doors are locked, can be helpful. These should be conducted in a manner that maintains the Veterans' privacy. Also important are ongoing opportunities for education on the importance of locking doors.
- Educating Veterans on the new guidance around emergency medications vs. non-emergency medications is key.

#### **What do I do if I have questions?**

- If you have questions regarding medication storage guidance as outlined in this document, please speak with your GPD Liaison or contact the GPD National Program Office via email at [GPDgrants@va.gov](mailto:GPDgrants@va.gov).