



Quality Management Bulletin - April 2026

Target Audience - Qualified Vendors and Providers

Transmittal Date - 04/30/2026

This month's Quality Management bulletin includes information on an investigative process change for medication errors and education about heat-related effects on those taking certain medications.

Process Change for Medication Errors

Medication administration is a critical component of caring for members. Many rely on medications to manage behavioral and physical health conditions. Failure to administer them correctly can result in significant adverse outcomes. Due to the importance of this process, the Quality Management Unit (QMU) has implemented updates to improve the response to medication-related incidents.

Vendors can now include all pertinent documentation by using the upload option in the "Attachments" section when submitting incident reports through the AHCCCS Portal.

Documents that may be required (applicable to the service) to support the review of a potential medication-related care concern include, but are not limited to:

- Current medication list
- Medication Administration Record (MAR) in use at the time of the incident
- Physician medication orders
- Medication policy outlining staff training and internal processes for responding to medication errors
- Copy of staff training records related to the incident
- Documentation of coordination of care with involved parties (e.g., physicians, pharmacy, planning team, emergency services, guardians)

The goal of this process is to identify gaps that may have contributed to the medication error, evaluate staff response at the time of the event, and determine actions to prevent recurrence.

Once an incident is received and triaged by DDD, the District Assignment (DA) letter will be sent to the Vendor requesting the required documentation within 24 hours. At the same time, the assigned Quality Assurance Nurse will initiate outreach to all relevant parties to investigate the reported care concern. If documentation was received upon the report of the incident, this will be reviewed and credited to the documentation requests from the DA letter and nurse outreach.

After DDD's Health and Safety review is completed, the Investigation Nurse assigned will review all

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fact-finding to finalize the resolution report. If the incident is substantiated, a formal Corrective Action Plan (CAP) letter will be issued to the Vendor outlining required remediation actions and timelines.

Pharmacy Corner

As we head into the summer months in Arizona, the risk of heat-related illness increases. It is important for providers to know how medications and heat can interact, leading to potentially severe side effects. Dehydration can be a significant concern for the individuals we serve. In general, focusing on appropriate hydration and watching for signs and symptoms of dehydration or decreased sweating are extremely pertinent, especially if a person is on certain medications.

Medications such as diuretics for high blood pressure can decrease the need to drink fluids. If a member is taking an antipsychotic medication or mood stabilizer, they need to stay sufficiently hydrated during the hot summer, as these medications can impact the body's ability to regulate temperature. Certain antidepressants can decrease sweating. In addition, some of these medications can cause dehydration or other side effects such as sleepiness, which can cause the person to drink less. Some medications, such as lithium, can cause increased urination and may impact a member's electrolytes. Signs of dehydration include fainting, falls, and drug toxicity.

When a member sees their healthcare provider, make sure they are checking the member's hydration status, electrolytes and temperature. Member medication regimens should be reviewed with their healthcare provider, with consideration of how these medications may affect a member's ability to deal with the Arizona heat. If a member is dehydrated, they may exhibit signs such as decreased urine output, fatigue, dry mouth, and confusion.

Dehydration can be prevented by limiting the member's outdoor activity during peak heat hours, keeping the air conditioner on and at a comfortable temperature, and encouraging the member to drink water throughout the day.

See this [Heat and Medications info sheet](#) for more information about the signs of dehydration.

References

- <https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/hcp/clinical-guidance/heat-and-medications-guidance-for-clinicians.html>
- <https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/extreme-weather/heat/heat-medications-Info-for-health-care-providers.pdf>

As always, thank you for your time, attention, and continued commitment to the members we serve.

For all QM inquiries, please contact one of the following District emails.

- District Central - DDDCentralIR@azdes.gov
- District East - DDDEastIR@azdes.gov
- District North - DDDDistrictNorthIncidentReports@azdes.gov
- District South - DDDD2IR@azdes.gov
- District West - DDDWestIR@azdes.gov