

**Dear Camp Onas Parent/Guardian,**

Pennsylvania's approach to medication management for the healthcare professional (our nurses) is rather restrictive and does not seem to appreciate the specifics of summer camp. Nurses are required to have two separate 'things' before they can distribute medications.

Below we give a brief explanation of what we need, and the ways we can comply with the law and reduce the extra effort needed to give medications while away from parents.

In short: We need both a **doctor's order AND the prescription must be filled by a pharmacy or come from a labeled package** (like a box from the aisle).

- **A doctor's order:** is the instructions ('order') from the prescriber to the nurse. Doctors do this in the hospital every day but parents may be unfamiliar with this as they do not need an order to give their own child medication.
- **The prescription:** is the instructions for the pharmacy to fill the prescription. Note: this is the prescription given to the pharmacy, we only see evidence of it by the bottle. Most if not all pharmacies' provide instructions for taking the medication, this is not the same as a doctor's order.

**However...**

- **New for 2023:** Camp Onas has stock and doctor's permission to continue many over-the-counter medications *as long as we have expressed permission from a parent* on the Health Form. We are hopeful that this will save some parents from needing to coordinate with your child's prescriber for common medications.
  - This will eliminate the need for orders for: seasonal allergy meds, necessary vitamins/supplements (w clear, commercial labels), birth control, skin care/astringents/creams, and routine GI-related medications like fiber, probiotics, ex-lax, lact-aid.
- **New for 2023:** we have added some conditional orders for common medications to reduce the need to contact the prescriber.
  - Specifically: occasional asthma inhaler use, individualized eye/ear drops needs, and some nutritional supplements and vitamins.

Please take a moment to review the policy changes in the Parent and Guardian Handbook, and do not hesitate to give us a call or send us an email if you have questions. **We are here to help!** (610) 847-5858, friends@camponas.org.

--The Camp Onas Staff

## **Medication Overview:**

At Camp, we have medications in stock that have been approved by our Doctor. You allow (or prohibit) us to give these medications through approval on the health form. If your child needs something on this list, we can give it.

If your child takes something that is not on our list, there's a chance that we have **conditional orders** for a medication like what your child is on.

These medication types include:

- seasonal allergy medications, (allegra, claritin, zyrtec) - either your stock or ours
- birth control
- skin care/astringents/creams
- and routine GI-related medications like fiber, probiotics, ex-lax, lact-aid.

For your child to receive any of the above. We need clear, **explicit instructions in the health form medication section** to be filled out, proper labeling, and we will review that at check-in together.

We also have **conditional orders** to continue the medication plan for the following types of medications:

- Rescue inhalers (that are only used occasionally)
- Individualized eye/ear drops for prevention or if the child comes to camp with a recent prescription
- Some medically necessary vitamins or supplements.

Again, for your child to receive any of the above. We need clear, **explicit instructions in the health form medication section** to be filled out, proper labeling, and we will review that at check-in together.

## **Orders for medications:**

If the medication is not easily put into one of the above categories, an order is needed.

- A dated order from a licensed prescriber allows our nurses to give the medication. Prescribers can use their own stationary, we also have one available on our website for ease of use. Many parents have found that using their pediatrician's Web messaging service is the quickest way to get this paperwork done.

#### PRESCRIBERS ORDER FORM

- This gets uploaded thru our Parent and Guardian Portal

#### Packaging Overview:

- All medication must arrive in pharmacy-prepared or commercially available packaging.
- If your camper takes multiple medications in a day, we require them to be *individually-packaged by a pharmacy service*. We suggest **Horsham Pharmacy** as they are close, personable, and reliable. Their information is below however most major pharmacies now offer this service.

**If there are multiple pills to be taken, we need them individually packaged by a pharmacy.**

*-We do not accept medications in "Days-of-the-Week" pill boxes or other non-pharmacy dosage containers, nor will we accept entire pill bottles if several medications are taken at the same time.*

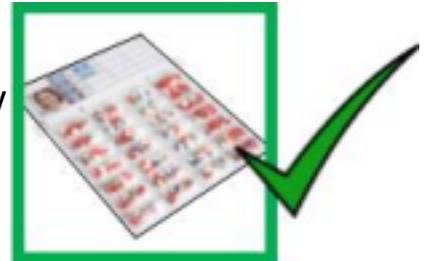
#### Option A (Use the pharmacy we work with)

Horsham Pharmacy: ([www.horshamrx.com](http://www.horshamrx.com)) is local, affordable, and will deliver medications directly to camp. They are also a small, independent business that is easy to work with. They have printable prescription sheets available to make it easy for your doctor/ practitioner to complete. They charge \$1/week to package the medications in blister packs, and they accept most insurance plans (to cover the prescriptions), and will sell and package "over the counter" medications at the store price. Their contact information and forms are on our website. **They will need your prescription by June 1<sup>st</sup> and they will deliver your camper's packs directly to Onas.**

OR

#### Option B (Use your own pharmacy)

**You can work with your own pharmacy** to have your camper's medications dispensed into blister/ pill packs for their time at camp. Most national pharmacies do not charge for the packaging service (it's a complimentary service they offer with your purchase, and the packaged medications are shipped to you). Most pharmacies will package both prescribed and "over the-counter" medications together, provided you have a prescription for all of the requested medications.



#### What about...?

Non-pill medications, such as inhalers, liquids, injections, and creams may still be brought to camp in their original packaging, provided the original packaging and pharmacy label are attached, **and** they are accompanied by prescriber's orders for the nurse to give it.

#### Why?

In PA, only pharmacists and prescribers (not nurses or other healthcare providers) are allowed to dispense medication to smaller containers. Blister and pill packs are "pre-dispensed" by a pharmacist. Pill-packs/ blister packs are the industry standard used in schools, camps, and other institutional settings. They help healthcare give medications to the correct person, at the correct time, in the correct amount, and according to the prescriber's instructions.

#### Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:

**Can I just pack my camper's meds/supplements in their belongings to take on their own, they do it at home?**

Please don't. Integrity is one of the key values we hold at Onas, and doing so would be against the rules. Our policy of no medications in the bunks is for the protection of all. Setting up your child to have to lie puts them in a difficult situation that will negatively impact their experience at Camp. Medications found in the bunk may result in dismissal from camp without refund.

**My doctor won't give me a prescription but my camper takes it every day.**

We empathize with the reality of this but need to follow different rules than parents. This applies to melatonin, sleep vitamins, sleep ease, as well as other medications not mentioned.

**Our child takes an herbal supplement/alternative healing source that isn't prepared by a pharmacy or prescribed by a state recognized prescribing authority, what do we do?**

Again, we empathize with your desire to provide the best care for your child but we still need to follow the law of our state. Our healthcare professionals cannot give any medication that isn't properly prescribed and packaged as the state wants. Camp Onas will not give any substance packaged by a herbalist, naturalist, etc.

**Do you allow CBD or cannabis-derivatives?**

At this point, CBD and cannabis-derivatives remain illegal for nurses to distribute to minors outside of the hospital setting. If this law changes, we will consider it at that time.

**Will you make an exception for me/ my camper? I have a good reason.**

We recognize that all situations are different, but we are very unlikely to make exceptions. This policy is in place for legal and safety reasons, both of which we take seriously, but we will listen and attempt to make a plan with you, provided this happens prior to the start of the summer season.

**What types of medications do we need to have a conversation with the Health Center about soon after we register to see if Camp Onas can responsibly care for our child?**

We have limitations. It is our responsibility to consider both your child's success and the appropriateness of our program, staff, and participants based on the information you provide. Ultimately we both need to decide together if Camp Onas is right for your child and whatever they are going through. Please contact us soon after registration to have a conversation about the appropriateness of camp for the following types of medications/situation.

- Anaphylaxis reactions
- Multiple food allergies
- Multiple psychotropic medications (such as an SSRI and an adjunct)
  - Campers who have been hospitalized for mental health in the past year may be admitted to Onas after speaking with the Directors.
- Anticonvulsants, insulin/glucose control, antipsychotics, heart medications, diuretics
- Any medication that is being used off-label (ie. a beta blocker for anxiety)
- Personal Aid in school
- Any medication that affects balance, judgment, or dexterity
- Stopping medications for the summer

**What do you consider a medication to be?**

At Camp Onas, medication is defined as: *all products given by our nurses*. Includes all prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, probiotics, ointments, inhalers, saline nasal spray, and homeopathic remedies. (Examples include: Zyrtec, Claritin, Allegra, Zantac, Lactaid, Melatonin, preventive swimmers' ear drops, daily miralax, "eczema cream", Flonase, Zaditor eye drops, local bee pollen, essential oils)