

Understanding Compliance with Medical Equipment

Using medical equipment at home is a huge responsibility. Many caregivers do not know that using medical equipment as prescribed can affect nursing hours, home health staffing and eligibility for the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver for Those Who Are Medically Fragile Technology Dependent (MFTD waiver).

This guide explains what medical equipment compliance means, why it matters and how to ensure that your child's medical record accurately reflects their healthcare needs.

What “Compliance” Means:

Compliance simply means how often your child uses medical equipment the way their healthcare provider prescribed it. This includes equipment such as:

- Ventilator
- CPAP/BiPAP
- Suction Machine
- Oxygen
- Feeding Pump
- Other Medical Technology

Why Compliance Matters:

Using medical equipment as prescribed is important for your child's health, safety and overall well-being. If your child cannot use their equipment as intended, notify the clinic as soon as possible. Their team can adjust the care plan to ensure your child's safety.

Compliance also plays a role in determining the necessary **home health support services** your child may receive. When equipment use is challenging, clear documentation helps ensure your child's true level of need is understood and supported.



When Your Child Cannot Tolerate Their Equipment:

If your child is unable to use their medical equipment as prescribed, it is important to notify their medical team. The team can document what is happening and make sure your child's medical record continues to reflect their needs despite inaccurate or incomplete data from their equipment.

Intolerance or refusal is not “noncompliance.” It is a **medical issue** that you should share with your child's care team so they can guide you and update the care plan.

Children may struggle with equipment because of:

- Illness
- Sensory issues
- Pain or discomfort
- Mask fit or positioning problems
- Equipment malfunction
- Developmental stage
- Fatigue or behavioral needs

Home Health Nursing Documentation:

If compliance ever becomes an issue, home health nursing documentation supports your child's level of care in addition to caregiver reports. Nursing notes can be extremely helpful to show what's happening at home. They can provide:

- Records showing how your child uses equipment
- Notes on attempts your family made or stopped due to your child's intolerance
- Records of other equipment your child used
- Descriptions of symptoms, illness and other health status changes



Communicating With Your Child's Medical Team:

Most medical teams prefer communication through MyChart or patient portals. Phone calls are also an acceptable method. It helps to contact your child's medical team when:

- Your child cannot tolerate the equipment
- Illness makes using the equipment unsafe or impossible
- The equipment causes discomfort or distress
- You are using an alternative (for example, oxygen instead of CPAP)
- The problem is happening more often or becoming a pattern
- You need help troubleshooting

Sample language:

- *"My child is having trouble tolerating their equipment. Can you please document these new challenges in their chart?"*
- *"When my child is sick, they cannot safely use the device. What should we do instead, and can we add this option to their plan of care?"*
- *"Are there adjustments or alternative settings, devices, or supports we should try?"*
- *"Can you update their care plan to reflect these changes?"*

What You Can Ask For:

You have the right to ask your child's medical team for documentation and support that reflects what is truly happening at home. You are allowed to ask questions, request updates and advocate for a care plan that fits your child's needs. Your child's medical record should reflect what is happening in real life, not the ideal scenario.

Here are things you can ask for:

- Updated orders that match your child's reality (examples: oxygen during intolerance, different settings, new mask, slower feed rate, etc.)
- Notes in the medical record explaining equipment intolerance or challenges
- A plan for what to do when your child cannot tolerate the equipment
- After-visit summaries that show recent changes or decisions
- A letter of medical necessity to explain the changes and updated care plan
- Clarification when instructions are unclear or not working
- Documentation of alternative strategies your child is using
- Guidance on troubleshooting equipment tolerance
- Confirmation that your child's care plan reflects the current situation

Updating Your Care Coordinator:

It is important to keep your Care Coordinator informed. However, your first step should always be to **notify your child's medical team** so they can assess the situation, provide guidance and update the care plan. Once you contact the medical team, your Care Coordinator can help ensure that the medical documentation accurately reflects what is truly happening at home and meets state requirements.

Let your Care Coordinator know when:

- Your child is not tolerating their equipment
- Your child is sick or struggling with compliance more than usual
- You have contacted the clinic about intolerance or equipment issues
- Equipment is broken, malfunctioning or unsafe
- You feel unsure or need support navigating next steps

Your Care Coordinator and medical team work together. Keeping both of these partners updated helps ensure that your child's medical record accurately represents their needs.

Caregiver Reminder

You are doing an incredible job managing complex care at home. Compliance is about safety, documentation and making sure all members of your support team understand your child's real-world needs.

The Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) team is here to help you navigate this process. Be sure to contact your Care Coordinator with any questions or issues. We're here to help!

For questions or more information,
contact us at (800) 322-3722 or visit
our website at dsccl.uic.edu.

