MEMORANDUM
Department of Aging and Disability Services
Regulatory Services Policy * Survey and Certification Clarification

TO: Regulatory Services
Regional Directors and State Office Managers

FROM: Veronda L. Durden
Assistant Commissioner
Regulatory Services

SUBJECT: Paid Feeding Assistant Requirements – S&CC #05-13
Refer to Provider Letter #05-45 (Replaces Provider Letter #04-11)

APPLIES TO: Nursing Facilities

DATE: December 14, 2005

May existing staff such as clerical, dietary and housekeeping staff feed residents?

The Federal regulations and state rules permit any individual who successfully completes the
training and is properly supervised to act as a feeding assistant. A facility may decide to use
existing staff because they should already be trained in facility policies, are usually well
acquainted with residents and have time available to devote to feeding residents. Existing staff
must successfully complete the training and be properly supervised in order to feed residents.

Are family members and/or volunteers required to attend the training?

It would be a good idea for family members and volunteers to take the training and while we
encourage training, it is not a requirement. Many volunteers in facilities are family members
who are there to feed a relative. It is up to the facility to determine whether or not the volunteer
or family member needs to complete the feeding assistant training. Ultimately, facilities are
responsible for the care and safety of residents, even if a relative or friend feeds the resident.

Are feeding assistants allowed to provide snacks and liquids to residents?

Yes. Feeding assistants who have successfully completed the training, are properly supervised,
and are feeding residents who have no complicated feeding problems may provide assistance
with food and liquid at non-meal times. The rules do not limit working hours to mealtimes.
However, a feeding assistant can provide assistance in the dining room only.

May a facility continue to use dietary services’ workers to pass out trays, provide
beverages and condiments, talk to and encourage residents, and perform routine dining
room tasks?

Yes. The dietary staff does not need to be trained as feeding assistants if they do not feed
residents. Facilities must employ sufficient support personnel to carry out functions of the
dietary service.
Who can teach the feeding assistant curriculum?

A state-approved training course must be taught by a licensed health professional as defined in 40 TAC 19.101 (57) or by a registered dietitian. According to 19.101 (57) a licensed health care professional includes speech, physical and occupational therapists, registered nurses, physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists and nurse practitioners.

Where can the feeding assistant training take place?

Nursing facilities may conduct feeding assistant training. A facility may contract the training out to another nursing facility or another educational provider such as a community college. All providers must use the state-approved curriculum. The intent of the rule and training is to meet the needs of the residents and give facilities a means to utilize potential resources. This does not create a new credential.

Can a feeding assistant who was trained in a facility feed residents in a different facility?

Yes. The non-training facility must verify the feeding assistant successfully completed training.

What curriculum may be used for training feeding assistants?

Trainers must use the state-approved curriculum. The state approved curriculum is the Department of Aging and Disability’s curriculum located online at http://www.dads.state.tx.us/business/ltc/credentialing/curriculum/index.html.

What does “successfully completed a state-approved training course” mean?
A feeding assistant successfully completes the training by participating in all 16 hours of training. The feeding assistant must complete the 2-to-3 hour supervised feeding practicum. A feeding assistant must complete the reviews at the end of Modules 2-8 and actively participate in the interactive curriculum during the training hours.

Is there a competency test for feeding assistants?

No. There is no competency test for feeding assistants. A feeding assistant is expected to complete the written reviews throughout the training curriculum and actively participate in the interactive curriculum during the training hours. The instructor or the supervisory nurse evaluating the feeding practicuum must assess the competency of trained feeding assistants.

How long is the training?

The training curriculum is a 16-hour training. This includes a 3 hour allotment of time for participants to feed residents under the supervision of a licensed vocational nurse or registered nurse. The purpose of the observed feeding or practicum is for the trainer or a nurse to observe the participant and evaluate each participant’s readiness to feed residents.
If a surveyor enters a nursing facility and observes non-nursing staff feeding residents, what should they do?

- Surveyors will determine if the resident receiving the feeding assistance is one who has no complicated feeding problems. This will include observation, interviews and medical record review.
- Surveyors will observe to determine if the feeding assistance is provided in the dining room.
- Surveyors will observe to determine that an LVN or RN appropriately supervises feeding assistants.
- Surveyors will determine if the facility based the selection of the resident on the charge nurse’s assessment and the latest assessment and plans of care.

How do surveyors determine if the paid feeding assistants were properly trained?

Surveyors will review the facility training and employment records.

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact Tina Festi, Training Specialist, Policy Development and Support, at (512) 438-2275.

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