



Policy: PA.5203
Title: **Return and Disposal of Medications**
Department: CalOptima Health PACE
Section: Not Applicable

CEO Approval: /s/ Michael Hunn 02/21/2025

Effective Date: 10/01/2013

Revised Date: 02/01/2025

Applicable to: ☐ Medi-Cal
☐ OneCare
☒ PACE
☐ Administrative

I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the standards and procedures for the proper return and disposal of medications, including review of such returns and disposals, by the CalOptima Health Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Center.

II. POLICY

- A. CalOptima Health PACE shall promote timely, accurate, and documented return and disposal of medications.
- B. The CalOptima Health PACE pharmacist, clinic Registered Nurse (RN), or Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) shall conduct a monthly review of expiration dates on all CalOptima Health PACE clinic medications to identify expired medications for disposal.
- C. CalOptima Health PACE shall retain the Drug Disposal Logs for at least ten (10) years.

III. PROCEDURE

- A. Monthly medication review is recorded in the Stock Medication Log by the RN, or LVN, conducting the review.
- B. Identifying medications for disposal
 - 1. The CalOptima Health PACE clinic licensed nurse shall identify medications for disposal if found to be:
 - a. Discolored;
 - b. Solutions containing inappropriate precipitates;
 - c. Vials that are soiled;
 - d. Expired; or
 - e. Discontinued by the provider.

2. If medication is found to be in any of the states described in Section III.B.1 of this Policy, the medication will be destroyed immediately, in accordance with Section III.E of this Policy.
 3. If there is evidence of medication tampering (seal broken from unknown cause or missing medications), the CalOptima Health PACE nurse shall:
 - a. Call the appropriate pharmacy and communicate the incident;
 - b. Return immediately all medications along with the medication vial, bubble pack, or pill bottle to the dispensing pharmacy for review;
 - c. Notify the appropriate team members of tampering incident; and
 - d. Follow-up with the pharmacy to update and relay findings for review.
 4. Multiple dose vials are dated upon opening and initials of the employee opening the vials must be noted.
 5. Unless the manufacturer states otherwise, the CalOptima Health PACE RN or LVN shall discard multiple dose vials within twenty-eight (28) days after opening.
- B. CalOptima Health PACE shall contact the contracted pharmacist or the CalOptima Health PACE Pharmacist for guidance if there are any questions.
- C. Discontinued medications from Participant supply
1. CalOptima Health PACE shall:
 - a. Prohibit the transfer of a medication to any Participant other than for whom it was prescribed in accordance with federal law;
 - b. Remove discontinued medications from the Participant's medication supply and dispose of the medication in accordance with state and federal regulations; and
 - c. Not use discontinued medication for other Participants.
 2. Non-returnable medication that has been left in the CalOptima Health PACE Center by Participants, who are not expected to return, shall be destroyed in accordance with this Policy.
- D. Expired Medications from Participant Supply
1. The CalOptima Health PACE RN or LVN, shall identify medications that are expired.
 2. The clinic RN or LVN shall remove expired or outdated medication from the Participant's medication supply and log the disposal of the medications in the Drug Disposal Log.
 - i. The medication must be destroyed, in accordance with state and federal regulations.
- E. Medication Destruction Procedures
1. Controlled Substances
 - a. CalOptima Health PACE shall keep a log of all destroyed Controlled Substances using the CalOptima Health PACE Controlled Substance Disposal Log.

- i. Two (2) CalOptima Health PACE licensed nurses shall document the drug destructions and sign their names on the CalOptima Health PACE Drug Disposal Log.
 - b. All Controlled Substances to be destroyed shall be stored in a double-locked storage system, designated in the CalOptima Health PACE Center for disposed Controlled Substances.
 - c. The double-locked storage system shall be a separate storage system from Controlled Substances still in use.
 - d. Controlled Substances shall be subject to the CalOptima Health Policy PA.5202: Labeling and Clinic Storage of Medications.
2. Non-Controlled Substances
- a. CalOptima Health PACE shall keep a log of all destroyed non-Controlled Substances using the CalOptima Health PACE Drug Disposal Log.
 - b. Non-Controlled Substances will be destroyed on-site by one (1) CalOptima Health PACE licensed nurse and one (1) clinic employee.
3. Disposal of drugs
- a. CalOptima Health PACE shall place all non-sealed drugs for disposal into the “pharmaceutical waste” container in the clinic.
 - b. Medication labels will be removed or obscured using a black permanent marker prior to disposal.
 - c. The bio-hazardous waste vendor will pick up these containers on a regular scheduled basis and incinerate the contents.

F. Monitoring of return and disposal medication

1. The CalOptima Health PACE Pharmacist shall:
- a. Conduct frequent reviews and update the CalOptima Health PACE Quality Improvement department with any quality issues as needed; and
 - b. Work with the CalOptima Health PACE contracted pharmacies on any needed Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

IV. ATTACHMENT(S)

- A. Controlled Substance Disposal Log
- B. Drug Disposal Log
- C. Stock Medication Log

V. REFERENCE(S)

- A. CalOptima Health PACE Contract with the Department of Health Care Services for the PACE Program
- B. CalOptima Health Policy PA.5202: Labeling and Clinic Storage of Medications

- C. CalOptima Health PACE Program Agreement
- D. Title 22, California Code of Regulations (C.C.R.), §78317
- E. Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), §423.505(e)(4)

VI. REGULATORY AGENCY APPROVAL(S)

None to Date

VII. BOARD ACTION(S)

None to Date

VIII. REVISION HISTORY

Action	Date	Policy	Policy Title	Program(s)
Effective	10/01/2013	PA.5203	Return and Disposal of Medications	PACE
Revised	12/01/2014	PA.5203	Return and Disposal of Medications	PACE
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Revised	04/01/2024	PA.5203	Return and Disposal of Medications	PACE
Revised	02/01/2025	PA.5203	Return and Disposal of Medications	PACE

IX. GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
Controlled Substance	A drug or other substance, or immediate precursor included in Schedule I, II, III, IV, or V of the Federal Controlled Substances Act.
PACE Center	The location designated by CalOptima Health PACE at which Participants shall receive PCP services.
Participant	An individual enrolled in the CalOptima Health PACE program.