



QUESTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Question: Can volunteers or family members assist residents to eat?

Answer: Yes. The Interpretive Guidelines for Federal regulations found at §483.75(e), F493 state,

“Volunteers are not nurse aides and do not come under nurse aide training provisions...”

This requirement in its entirety reads:

§483.75(e) Required Training of Nursing Aides (1) Definitions “Licensed health professional” means a physician; physician assistant; nurse practitioner; physical, speech, or occupational therapist; physical or occupational therapy assistant; registered professional nurse; licensed practical nurse; or licensed or certified social worker. “Nurse aide” means any individual providing nursing or nursing-related services to residents in a facility who is not a licensed health professional, a registered dietitian, or someone who volunteers to provide such services without pay. Interpretive Guidelines §483.75(e) Volunteers are not nurse aides and do not come under the nurse aide training provisions of these requirements. Unpaid students in nursing education programs who use facilities as clinical practice sites under the direct supervision of an RN are considered volunteers. Private duty nurse aides who are not employed or utilized by the facility on a contract, per diem, leased or other basis, do not come under the nurse aide training provisions.

Dave’s Memo: Although the regulations are clear and volunteers can feed residents, please keep in mind other legal obligations such as the Nurse Practice Act which requires the nurse to delegate duties if he/she is sure that the person is knowledgeable in performing the task delegated. Another regulation to consider is Administrator 24/7 Protective Oversight. Utilizing volunteers to assist with feeding of resident's could be of great value especially for the resident in regards to social interactions and relationship building but the facility must ensure resident safety under all circumstances to the extent possible.

Although it’s not required, I would recommend formal training for your family and volunteers. Code of Federal Regulations 483.160 allows for **paid** feeding assistants in certified facilities in Missouri. The **paid** feeding assistant does not have to be a certified nurse assistant. The information found at <http://health.mo.gov/safety/cnaregistry/feedassistant.php> could be used to train your volunteer force. Another good resource to use as a training tool, *Dining Assistant Programs in Nursing Homes: Guidelines for Implementation* can be found at <http://health.mo.gov/safety/cnaregistry/pdf/DiningAsstManual.pdf>.