

# PREPARING FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES



**AGENCY POLICIES SHOULD INSTRUCT STAFF TO ALWAYS CONTACT 911 FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES!**  
**Time is of the essence—don't delay, call right away!**

## To prepare staff to handle a medical emergency, agencies should:

- ◇ Implement protocols and directives for staff to recognize and respond to potential medical emergencies such as breathing difficulties, falls and head injuries.
- ◇ Ensure policies empower direct support professionals and other staff to call 911 without first seeking approval from a manager, supervisor, or RN
- ◇ Provide initial and refresher training in First Aid, CPR, and recognizing signs and symptoms of illness
- ◇ Train staff to recognize signs of medical distress specific to the unique diagnoses or medical conditions of people receiving services. Consider using a “pain picture” to help staff recognize when someone is in pain and/or supplementing training with videos that provide a visual depiction of medical distress.

## Types of medical emergencies requiring immediate medical intervention:

- Loss of consciousness
- Severe shortness of breath
- Facial drooping or weakness in an arm or leg
- Chest pain
- Head trauma
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Poisoning
- Major broken bones
- Suicidal or homicidal feelings
- Falls
- Sudden blurry or double vision
- Suspected overdose
- Choking
- Severe/Constant abdominal pain

