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