

Self-treatment and treatment of family members

It is the Board's position that it is not appropriate for licensees to write prescriptions for controlled substances or to perform procedures on themselves or their family members. In addition, licensees should not treat their own chronic conditions or those of their immediate family members or others with whom the licensee has a significant emotional relationship. In such situations, professional objectivity may be compromised, and the licensee's personal feelings may unduly influence his or her professional judgment, thereby interfering with care.

There are, however, certain limited situations in which it may be appropriate for licensees to treat themselves, their family members or others with whom the licensee has a significant emotional relationship.

1. **Emergency Conditions.** In an emergency situation, when no other qualified licensee is available, it is acceptable for licensees to treat themselves or their family members until another licensee becomes available.
2. **Urgent Situations.** There may be instances when licensees or family members do not have their prescribed medications or easy physician access. It may be appropriate for licensees to call in short term prescriptions.
3. **Acute Minor Illnesses Within Clinical Competence.** While licensees should not serve as primary or regular care providers for themselves or their family members, there are certain situations in which care may be acceptable. Examples would be treatment of a simple urinary tract infection or prescribing ear drops for a family member with external otitis. It is the expectation of the Board that licensees will not treat recurrent acute problems.
4. **Over the Counter Medication.** This position statement is not intended to prevent licensees from suggesting over the counter medications or other non-prescriptive modalities for themselves or family members, as a lay person might.

Licensees who act in accord with this position statement will be held to the same standard of care applicable to licensees providing treatment for patients who are unrelated to them. Thus, licensees should not treat problems beyond their expertise or training and should be sure to maintain an appropriate medical record documenting any care that is given.

Licensees who inappropriately treat themselves, their family members or others with whom they have a significant emotional relationship should be aware that they may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board.