

**Bulk Over-The-Counter Medication in
Nursing Homes and Residential Care Facilities**

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Bulk pill containers of over-the-counter medication are considered “routine” in nature and therefore fall under paragraph (A) of rule 3701-17-17, which requires “a nursing home to provide or obtain routine ... medicines, drugs, and biological for its resident[s] except if prohibited by state or federal law.” Such medications need not meet the labeling requirements in paragraph (C) of rule 3701-17-17 of the Administrative Code. For residential care facilities, bulk pill containers of over-the-counter medication do not meet the meaning of “prescription medication and drugs” under paragraph (I)(3) of rule 3701-17-59 and therefore need not meet labeling requirements.

The use of bulk pill containers of over-the-counter medication is allowed by the Ohio State Board of Pharmacy in institutional settings. Further, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services allows for the use of bulk pill containers of over-the-counter medication in certified nursing and skilled nursing facilities. See the Interpretive Guidelines to 42 CFR 483.60.

While these containers need not meet the labeling requirements of paragraph (C) of rule 3701-17-17 (nursing homes), or paragraph (I)(3) of rule 3701-17-59 (residential care facilities), bulk pill containers of over-the-counter medication shall contain an FDA approved manufacturer’s label indicating, in part, the medication:

- Name;
- Strength;
- Quantity;
- Accessory instructions;
- Lot number; and
- Expiration date.

Medication from an over-the-counter bulk pill container must be administered by an individual acting within his or her scope of practice and based on a prescriber’s order. The individual administering medication or assisting with self-administration from an over-the-counter bulk pill container cannot repack medication, whether for staff or resident convenience, as such repackaging is considered dispensing and is a violation of Ohio State Board of Pharmacy laws.