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Transporting Medically Fragile or Technology-Assisted Students

By Cheryl Wolf

Transporting Medically Fragile or Technology-Assisted Students

Ray Turner, Ed.D., provided the pupil transportation community a valuable resource when he wrote "Transporting Medically Fragile or Technology-Assisted Students." The manual offers descriptions of numerous medical conditions as well as strategies for transporting students with those conditions. But the book doesn't stop there. It offers everything from an overview of IDEA and the IEP process to a driver team self-assessment guide for the special-needs bus. Turner proposes that the driver team that transports medically fragile or technology-assisted students must regularly perform self-assessment to ensure that appropriate services are provided and safety standards maintained.

Turner shows the importance of developing daily healthcare and emergency plans for each student in accordance with specific handling requirements for the driver team. His in-depth discussion of "do not resuscitate" (DNR) orders on the special-needs bus is thought provoking, and Turner offers suggestions for what to include in developing a DNR protocol. He also stresses the importance of creating a transportation team, which includes the school nurse and a physical and occupational therapist and, when appropriate, a speech therapist, a respiratory therapist and a private-duty nurse. The team concept acts as a continuous thread throughout the manual and is characterized as a key aspect of safe transportation.

Discuss before implementing

Turner provides excellent recommendations for transporting medically fragile students, as well as a list of support personnel who might be used as resources. But we as transporters must keep in mind that all individual transportation plans for special-needs students must be agreed-upon and documented during the IEP conference. Turner's recommendations should be discussed with the student's school nurse, healthcare provider(s) and the IEP team before implementation.

Advances in medical technology have allowed children with special healthcare needs to attend public schools and we, as transporters, are challenged daily to provide safe transportation for them. Turner has moved us a step forward in our efforts to provide this related service to a very special population. I highly recommend this manual as a valuable resource to the pupil transportation industry.

A look at what's inside

Dense with information, Ray Turner's manual is divided into the following seven chapters:

- Chapter 1** — Introduction: Transporting the Medically Fragile or Technology Assisted
- Chapter 2** — Special Bus Handling for Specific Medical Conditions
- Chapter 3** — Transporting the Technology Assisted
- Chapter 4** — Support Personnel for the Medically Fragile/Technology Dependent
- Chapter 5** — Students Requiring Extreme Special Handling
- Chapter 6** — Related Medical and Health Issues on the Special-Needs Bus
- Chapter 7** — Transporting the Medically Complex: A Driver Team Self-Assessment Guide for the Special-Needs Bus

Ray Turner's 340-page "Transporting Medically-Fragile or Technology-Assisted Students" (Copyright, 2000) is available through White Buffalo Press at

www.whitebuffalopress.com.

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