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## **Administration of Undesignated Asthma Medications in School (2026) Standing Order and Protocol**

**Purpose:** Undesignated asthma medication may treat potentially serious episodes of respiratory distress in children with known asthma as well as those without a prior history.

**Scope:** This standing order authorizes the administration of school-supplied undesignated asthma medication for severe respiratory distress at school or during school-sponsored activities. Undesignated asthma medication (i.e., albuterol) may be stocked at Illinois schools for this purpose (See School Code, [105 ILCS 5/22-30](#)).

Under this standing order, any school nurse or trained personnel, as defined in the above code, may administer the undesignated asthma medication without the need for a direct order from an attending provider to an individual who is believed to be experiencing respiratory distress and who may benefit from its administration. This may occur prior to the arrival/availability of EMS and on school grounds before, during, or after school activities, including on a school bus.

Personnel, other than a school nurse, must complete annual [training](#)<sup>1</sup> on the use of this medication as provided by the RESCUE Illinois program of Asthma and Allergy Impact and Rescue (AAIR). Documentation of this training must be kept on file and available for audit.

**Medication:** This order refers to the use of a quick-relief medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (i.e., albuterol). The medication may be delivered through a metered-dose inhaler (MDI) with a reusable or disposable spacer.

Suggested stocked undesignated medication: Albuterol MDI (90 mcg/actuation) to be administered with a spacer. It is recommended that at least two undesignated albuterol MDIs be stocked at all times in the school. The school size and number of students with asthma may make it appropriate for a school to have more than two MDIs stocked at all times.

It is also recommended that at least two spacers are stocked at all times. Disposable cardboard spacers are inexpensive, effective, available without a prescription, and may be used for this purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://weareaair.org/how-we-help/school-programs/illinois-schools/>

Albuterol MDIs may be cleaned according to the manufacturer's instructions and allowed to fully dry before reuse. Disposable spacers are not to be reused for another student.

*Contraindication: Hypersensitivity to albuterol or any component of the formulations.*

### **Communication**

If undesignated asthma medication is administered under this standing order, trained personnel must also:

1. Communicate promptly (within the same day) with the parent/guardian of the student receiving the above treatment.
2. Report the use of undesignated asthma medication using the [Illinois State Board of Education \(ISBE\) Undesignated Asthma Medication Report Form](#)<sup>2</sup> within three days of administration of the medication. This will satisfy the reporting requirement for notice to the prescriber who provided this standing order. A separate report to IDPH is not needed. Schools using albuterol obtained through their participation in the RESCUE Illinois Schools Program should also complete the report in the RESCUE Illinois Schools portal.

### **Notes**

1. Parents or guardians of all students enrolled in the school should be notified at the start of each school year, or for new students as they enroll, that their student may receive medication according to this standing order. The parent or guardian shall acknowledge the notification by signing it and returning it to the school.
2. A parent's or guardian's failure to sign and return the notification does not preclude a school nurse or other trained personnel from administering undesignated albuterol when indicated.
3. School administration must ensure required annual training is completed, as only trained personnel or a school nurse shall administer undesignated asthma medication. Certifications of successful completion of training must be maintained on file at the school. The names of trained personnel shall be provided to the school nurse and school administrator.
4. Each school is responsible for establishing and maintaining the stock of undesignated albuterol for the purposes of this standing order and tailoring its emergency health protocol to include this use.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/School-Nursing.aspx>

5. Undesignated albuterol obtained by the school using this standing order may be administered or provided for self-administration to students with an asthma action plan who may not have their own unexpired prescribed albuterol available or easily accessible at school if the undesignated albuterol meets the student's prescription.
  - If the student has an asthma action plan on file at the school, that protocol should be followed when administering undesignated albuterol. However, attempts to locate the asthma action plan should not hinder timely administration of albuterol. If the asthma action plan cannot be located or accessed in a timely fashion, or immediately in case of severe symptoms, school nurses and trained personnel should follow the protocol outlined in this standing order.

**Standing orders are as follows:**

The school nurse and/or trained personnel should:

**Evaluate** the person's symptoms and history.

**Assess** the person's airway, breathing, respiratory rate, work of breathing, pulse, and color to confirm the appropriateness of albuterol use. **Call 911 if signs of severe respiratory distress are present.**

- Signs of severe respiratory distress: Struggling to breath/severe shortness of breath; consistent coughing, wheezing, chest tightness; difficulty speaking (one word or short sentences); chest retractions (chest/neck are pulling in); use of accessory muscles (stomach muscle are moving up and down, chest/neck are pulling in); fast pulse; blueness around the lips or fingernails (may look gray or "dusky"); agitation

**Review** contraindications and precautions as taught in their training.

**Administer** albuterol metered dose inhaler using a spacer.

- For severe respiratory distress, ensure 911 is called and administer 8 puffs, each puff 15-30 seconds apart.
- For mild-to-moderate respiratory distress, administer 4 puffs, each puff 15-30 seconds apart.
- Do not leave the individual unattended.
- Restrict physical activity, encourage slow breaths, and allow the individual to rest.

**Reassess the person in 10-15 minutes** following the administration of albuterol.

**Readminister**, if no improvement, 4 or 8 puffs, depending on severity of respiratory distress as discussed above.

**Reassess in 10-15 minutes.** If symptoms do not improve, call 911 (if not already called) and administer 8 additional puffs. Continue above steps for severe respiratory distress.

**PRESCRIPTION**

Dispense to a verified Illinois school district, public school, charter school, or nonpublic school only.

Rx: Albuterol HFA Metered Dose Inhaler(s), 90 mcg/actuation

Sig: Use per protocol.

To be administered, as needed, to an individual exhibiting symptoms of respiratory distress in accordance with this standing order. The stock inhaler must be administered by a school nurse or trained personnel.

Dispense: Up to 6 inhalers

Refills: Unlimited

*Sameer Vohra*

2/27/2026

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Physician's Signature Date

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Sameer Vohra MD, JD, MA

**Physician's Name (Print)**

**License:** 036135164

**NPI:** 1841585783

Effective Date: 3/1/2026

Expiration Date: 2/28/2027