

## Direct Order or Medical Directive?—What is needed in this situation?

Question	Physician Order	Medical Directive
My patient's blood sugars are too high. I need to initiate insulin. What do I need?	✓	
I need to adjust my patient's insulin.	✓	Or ✓
I am skilled at insulin adjustment and would like to adjust my patient's insulin to achieve tighter control.		✓
My patient is on insulin, and I have been following him every 3 months. He needs an adjustment in his insulin, what do I need?	✓	Or ✓
The ordering physician hasn't signed the medical directives in our organization.	✓	
I'm not sure I am comfortable adjusting insulin on my patient.	✓	
I would like to give my patient a sample of insulin to get started. Can I give him a sample?	✓	Or ✓
I would like to change the insulin type/brand.	✓	Or ✓
I would like to order blood work	✓	Or ✓

As self-regulating professionals, all implementers are responsible for practising in accordance with the practice documents that their respective College publishes and with relevant legislation.<sup>i</sup>

Remember that the authorizer (physician or NP) has absolute responsibility for ensuring that the delegation is taking place reasonably and without undue risk to the patient.<sup>ii</sup> Therefore, the more complex the medical directive, the more trust required in the implementor's knowledge, skill and judgement.

<sup>i</sup> College of Nurses of Ontario *Practice Guideline: Authorizing Mechanisms*, 2011.

<sup>ii</sup> Tanchak S, Goldig B, The Office Consult, Dialogue, *Comprehensive guide and toolkit provides templates for medical directives*, April 2007.