



## Health & Safety Alert #6-2-02

### Risk of Airway Obstruction in Prone Position

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#### Risk of Airway Obstruction

**Situation** - A recent review of several cases showed that there is a risk of airway obstruction during therapeutic prone positioning for some individuals. These situations are identified in the alert. Please share this with staff providing services to individuals in your county, as well as health care staff, physical and occupational therapy staff and managers.

#### Alert - Risk of Airway Obstruction During Therapeutic Prone Positioning

- Individuals placed in a therapeutic prone position (e.g., treatment of contractures, postural drainage of lung) may suffer an obstruction of their airway if they are fully dependent on staff for positioning, or become fatigued, or have a seizure.
- No person who has epilepsy or who may quickly become unable to lift and reposition their head can be left unattended when placed in the prone position for therapeutic reasons.
- Visual contact with these individuals is to be maintained at all times while they are in the prone position for therapeutic reasons.

\*Service Coordinators should ensure that potential safety issues are addressed in all settings.

For questions or comments regarding the above Alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.