

Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Policy and Procedures Directive  
DS-19-01  
February 20, 2019

To: DBVI Regional Managers; Rehabilitation Teachers; Orientation and Mobility Instructors; Service Division Management Team

Cc: Rick Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner

From: Jane Ward Solomon, Director of Instruction

RE: RT-IL Chapter 8E Addition of Guideline for Support Canes

Effective February 14, 2019

The memo below has been added as page 3 to the RT-IL Manual, Chapter 8E: Agency Services - ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY. The full chapter can be found on the Document Repository.

### Memo: Support Canes

A. O&M instructors are considered the most qualified authority at DBVI to work with/develop goals, plans and programs of instruction with white canes. Staff working with individuals who may benefit from the use of a white cane, should be referred to/consult with the O&M program staff for consideration.

a. Reference: In the field of vision rehabilitation, there is a question on whether or not O&M instructors and/or RTs have the knowledge and skills to issue support canes. Based on the scope of practice for O&M specialists, support canes are not specifically mentioned, (ACVREP, 2018a). However, the scope of practice for certified vision rehabilitation therapists (CVRTs) specifically states in an editor's note that CVRTS are to make referrals to the

appropriate professional rather than issue a support, (ACVREP, 2018b).

B. DBVI does not “prescribe” medical devices. A “support cane” is considered a medical device. The issuing of support canes, without consultation with a medical authority (PT ,OT, doctor) is not a routine practice.

C. Individuals who have their own support canes may have support canes marked with tape for identification, another type of cane issued (ID, standard, AMD), or receive a replacement support cane (red and white) at the discretion of the O&M instructor. The issuing of a support cane should be in collaboration with the individual and appropriate medical professional. Further, support canes should be ordered individually, and documented according to DBVI procedures and guidelines.

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