Med note scenario #1

Ginny moved out of the house and the service is going to be disconnected. Ginny’s uncle (Pete) and his girlfriend (Sally) are living there. Sally calls the electric company and makes arrangements for the service to be put in her name, but that won’t happen until tomorrow and service is due to be disconnected today. Pete wants to provide a med note to keep the service on for the one day. Can the company accept the med note?

The group that worked on this scenario came up with the following solution, which CAPI would support: Allow Sally the extra day to put the account in her name.

Med note scenario #2

John calls the gas company after receiving a disconnection notice to try and make an arrangement. The rep offers to hold the disconnection until the last date on the notice. John then asks if he would be able to promise a med note on the last date listed on the notice, which would carry him through to his pay day. The rep says no, that the med note promise date would be today and now if John doesn’t get a med note within seven days service will go off. However, the last date on the notice is more than seven days away.

Should the rep have required John to use a med note promise that day, after he was initially told the company would hold off on disconnecting until the last date on the notice? What other options can the company offer John?

The group that worked on this scenario came up with the following solution:

The rep shouldn’t have told John that the seven-day med note promise would begin on the day he called in about the notice if John was not prepared to say he would provide a med note within seven days. CAPI would agree with this position.

The rep could start the seven-day promise of a med note on the last date of the disconnection notice. CAPI would agree to this but would also have supported the utility *not* allowing the seven-day promise period to begin on the last date of the notice. Board rule 3.303(A) regarding use of a med note to avoid disconnection states that service will go off unless: “the ratepayer presents to the utility (or gives actual notice that he or she will, within seven days, present to the utility….” The use of medical notes is intended to keep service on (if it hasn’t already been disconnected) when there is a medical emergency. Unless the circumstances are unique, asking if a med note can be *promised* on a specific date in the future would imply that there isn’t an actual emergency at the time the consumer is speaking with the utility.

However, the other option given the consumer was to wait until the last date of disconnection in order for John to receive his paycheck. CAPI would support this option.