

HEALTH SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

North Carolina Department Of Correction
Division Of Prisons

SECTION: Care and Treatment of Patient -
Medication Administration

POLICY # TX II-11

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SUBJECT: Psychotropic Medication Review

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 2011
SUPERSEDES DATE: October 2008

References

Related ACA Standard

**4th Edition Standards for Adult Correctional
Institutions 4-4401**

PURPOSE

To provide monitoring guidelines for medications prescribed by mental health staff.

POLICY

Given that significant adverse side effects can accompany the use of psychotropic medications in the treatment of diagnosable mental illness, special precautions must be taken to ensure that these side effects are identified at the earliest possible time and kept to the lowest incidence possible.

PROCEDURE

- A. As a general rule, **new** orders for psychotropic medication should not be written to exceed thirty (30) days. However, in the outpatient setting this 30 day period may be extended up to 90 days, if the attending psychiatrist determines that this extension is clinically justified. The clinical rationale for extending the period beyond 30 days must be documented in the progress note section of the inmate's health records.
- B. Psychotropic medication orders should be renewed every 30 days. However, in the outpatient setting when the attending psychiatrist determines that an inmate is asymptomatic of adverse side effects and is sufficiently stabilized, he/she may write an order renewing the medication for up to a maximum of one hundred eighty (180) days. The clinical rationale for extending the renewal period beyond 30 days must be documented in the progress note section of the inmate's health record.
- C. All orders for psychotropic medication shall include the target symptoms, i.e., the symptoms that the medication was ordered to treat.
- D. Inmates prescribed psychotropic medication shall be examined by a psychiatrist each time the medication is renewed. The purpose of the exam is to determine whether or not the medication should be continued, adjusted, or terminated.
- E. Nursing shall be observant for evidence of toxicity or adverse side effects. Should toxicity or adverse side effects be evident, the nurse shall notify the psychiatrist and complete a Referral DC-540 to assure the inmate is seen for follow-up. The nurse shall document in the inmate's health record the presence of toxicity or adverse side effects on the Chronological Record of Health Care DC-387.



4/4/11

John S. Carbone, M.D., Director of Mental Health

Date

SOR: Director of Mental Health Services