

HEALTH SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

North Carolina Department Of Correction
Division Of Prisons

SECTION: Care and Treatment of Patient -
Medication Administration

POLICY # TX II-5

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SUBJECT: Starter Dose Program

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 2012
SUPERCEDES DATE: August 2005

References

Related ACA Standards

**4th Edition Standards for adult Correctional
Institutions 4-4378**

PURPOSE

The starter dose program provides short term quantities of medications for the timely initiation of therapy until the balance of the medication order can be secured from a Division of Prisons (DOP) Pharmacy

POLICY

Inmates shall receive provider prescribed medications for the timely initiation of therapy.

PROCEDURE

A. Starter Dose Inventory

1. Selection of Starter Dose Drugs

- a. Starter dose drugs shall be selected from a standardized starter dose inventory list determined by **Apex Central Pharmacy**. The starter dose inventory list shall represent a variety of therapeutic categories.
- b. Controlled Substances shall be excluded from the Starter Dose Program per federal and state rules and regulations.
- c. A facility's final starter dose drug selections shall be coordinated with the facility clinicians and a DOP Pharmacy. The selection represents the facility's most commonly prescribed drugs deemed critical for immediate therapy.

2. Packaging and Labeling of Starter Dose Drugs

- a. A preprinted starter dose label ~~will~~ shall be attached to each starter dose container.
- b. Each starter dose shall be assigned a unique prescription number.
- c. Upon end product verification of the final starter dose drug product, pharmacists shall ensure the inclusion of all necessary information as required by state rules and regulations.

3. Storage of Starter Dose Drugs

- a. Each correctional facility shall store all starter dose drugs for medical and mental health treatment in the same location, preferably where the order processing takes place.
- b. Starter dose drugs for dental clinics shall be stored in the dental clinic.
- c. **Starter dose drugs for intravenous administration shall be stored in the infirmary where administration takes place.**
- d. The starter dose drug inventory shall be secured with key or combination lock to deny access to unauthorized persons.
- e. Storage for starter dose drugs is separate from other drug inventories, i.e., stock, emergency or non-prescription drugs.

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4. Quantity per Container of Starter Dose Drugs

- a. Starter dose drug quantity per container shall be limited to the short term therapy of four (4) days as permitted by the North Carolina Board of Pharmacy rules and regulations. Drug quantities per container are determined by calculating the most commonly prescribed dosing regimens for the drug. Inventory levels per drug shall be determined by the frequency of use at the facility.
- b. All unit of use items, i.e., inhalers, injectables, **parenterals**, which are issued as whole containers shall be exempt from the four (4) day quantity guideline.

B. Starter Dose Order Processing

1. Starter Dose Drugs shall be issued from the starter dose program by authorized persons upon the initiation of a **providers'** written or verbal order when immediate therapy is deemed critical.
2. The starter dose drug issuance shall be documented on the corresponding *Starter Dose Log Sheet*. Each drug shall be recorded on a separate *Starter Dose Log Sheet*.
3. Starter dose drugs may be obtained from a nearby facility if authorized personnel is not available at their facility or they do not have a starter dose program. The facility obtaining the starter dose must provide a copy of the physician order to the facility providing the starter dose. The facility that issues the starter dose shall be responsible for forwarding the *Starter Dose Log Sheet* and physician order to a DOP Pharmacy for replacement of the starter dose.
4. Nursing staff shall complete the appropriate inmate information on the starter dose label.
5. The starter dose prescription number shall be noted on the physician order and immediately forwarded with the *Starter Dose Log Sheet* to a DOP Pharmacy.

C. Starter Dose Replenishment by a DOP Pharmacy

1. A DOP Pharmacy shall replace the starter dose upon receiving a physician order which has the starter dose prescription number along with the corresponding *Starter Dose Log Sheet*.
2. The starter dose information is entered into the corresponding inmate's profile to provide medication tracking.

D. Starter Dose Receipt and Accountability

1. Starter dose receipt and accountability consists of the following:
 - a. Correctional facilities shall immediately enter the receipt of starter dose replacements on the corresponding *Starter Dose Log Sheet*. The inability to reach the starter par level, is an indication to the facility that an order has not been sent to the pharmacy for replacement.
 - b. Each facility shall complete a weekly *Starter Audit Form* by counting the actual quantity on hand and forwarding the *Starter Audit Form* to the pharmacy.
 - c. A DOP Pharmacist will review the *Starter Audit Form* for discrepancies.
 - d. If discrepancies are noted by a DOP Pharmacist, a *Starters On Grid* form shall be completed and faxed to the facility for processing.
 - e. The facility shall process the **Starters On Grid** form and fax the *Starter Dose Log Sheet* and corresponding physician order to the **requesting** pharmacy.

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- f. A DOP Pharmacy shall transfer and replace the starter associated with the discrepancy on the *Starter On Grid* form.
 - g. The facility shall use the oldest starter first in order to avoid having expired medications.
 - h. Expired starter doses shall be documented on the corresponding *Starter Dose Log Sheet* and returned to a DOP pharmacy for replacement.
 - i. Unused tablets/capsules resulting from medication orders not requiring the full starter dose quantity shall be placed in a medication envelope labeled with the starter dose prescription number and the name of the medication and returned to a DOP pharmacy for crediting.
2. A DOP Pharmacy representative shall conduct periodic review of the starter dose program.
3. Correctional facilities shall maintain starter dose packing slips for ninety (90) days and completed *Starter Dose Log Sheets* for three (3) years.



4/30/12

Paula Y. Smith, MD, Chief of Health Services

Date

SOR: Director of Pharmacy