GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

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DDS TRANSMITTAL# 22-02

TO: **All Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) Residential and Day Services Providers**

FROM: **Crystal Thomas, Program Manager, State Office of Policy, Planning and Innovation**

DATE: **January 12, 2022**

RE: **Clarification of Quarterly Psychotropic Medication Review Guidelines for People with Intellectual Disabilities Supported by DDA**

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) is releasing this transmittal to clarify the requirements for quarterly reviews of psychotropic medication for people with intellectual disabilities supported by DDA and to provide updated versions of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form and Instructions. This transmittal updates **DDS Transmittal 19-17: Psychotropic Medication Quarterly Review Guidelines for People with Intellectual Disabilities Supported by DDA**. *The attached Psychotropic Medication Review Form and corresponding Instructions replace the form and instructions dated September 5, 2019.*

People with intellectual disabilities can exhibit co-occurring psychiatric conditions that contribute to persistent challenging behaviors. In such cases, people should have appropriate access to information and treatment with psychopharmacologic interventions. When medical, physical, functional communicative, environmental, and trauma-related factors are ruled out as the causes of challenging behavior, psychotropic medications used in conjunction with Person-Centered Thinking practices and behavior support approaches can be very effective for ameliorating the negative impact of psychiatric conditions.

Psychotropic medications are medications prescribed for specific dysfunction in thinking, feeling, and behaviors caused by a diagnosed psychiatric illness in order to improve quality of life for affected people. People with intellectual disabilities supported by DDA may be prescribed psychotropic medication only after a psychiatric assessment has been completed which includes a mental health diagnosis, goals for treatment, and a risk/benefit analysis for the use of psychotropic medications.

If, after a thorough psychiatric assessment, a treatment provider recommends the use of medications then regular monitoring of psychotropic medication use is necessary to document

the effectiveness of treatment and ensure reasonable protection from serious side effects, unnecessary medications, and excessive medications.

1. **An interdisciplinary review of the use of psychotropic medications must be completed every 90 days.**

   The DDS Health and Wellness Standards at Standard 18 (Psychotropic Medications) and Standard 19 (Psychiatric Services) require that psychotropic medication reviews be completed at least every 90 days.

   At a minimum, participants in the interdisciplinary quarterly review process must include the person (and the person's substitute healthcare decision maker, if any), the prescribing professional, and the person's residential and day services providers (if any). If a behavior support plan is required for the person then input from the behavior support clinician is also essential.

   Because of scheduling conflicts, it may not be possible for all members of the support team to participate in the quarterly psychotropic review meeting. Rather than delaying reviews, the members of the support team can provide input on the Psychotropic Medication Review Form prior to the meeting and sign Page 2 of the form at the time they provide input.

   Signature, or electronic signature, on Page 3 indicates that the support team member provided input on Pages 1 or 2 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form and/or participated in the quarterly psychotropic medication review meeting.

2. **The DDS Psychotropic Medication Review Form shall be used to document the interdisciplinary review of prescriptions for psychotropic medications.**

   The purpose of the psychotropic medication review is to monitor the person's response to the medication, to determine whether the medication is effective for the stated treatment goals, to assess if the medication can be safely continued, and to evaluate whether gradual reductions in medication dosages are warranted.

   - Page 1 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form should be completed by the RN for the residential provider. If there is no residential provider, the form is completed by the RN for the provider that provides nursing services in the person's home.
   - Page 2 should be completed by the RN with input from the QDDP, day services provider, and the behavior support clinician, if any.
   - Page 3 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form must be completed by the prescriber at the time of the quarterly review.

3. **Residential providers shall document and provide information to the prescriber of psychotropic medication to assist the prescriber in assessing the effectiveness of the medication and the person's response, including any side effects.**

   Pages 1 and 2 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form document current psychiatric diagnoses, current medical problems that may impact mental health issues, laboratory examination results, side effect monitoring, medication changes, and behavioral functioning. *Pages 1 and 2 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form must be completed for every psychiatry appointment and attached to the medical appointment consult sheet for review with the prescribing physician. Pages 1 and 2 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form should be completed by the RN as close to the medical appointment date as possible to ensure that all information is current.*

4. **The Psychotropic Medication Review Forms must be uploaded in MCIS.**

   The forms should be uploaded in MCIS under "Clinical Services." For people with behavior support plans, the two most recent three-page Psychotropic Medication Review Forms should also be uploaded under the "BSP" tab in the "Medical Info" section for review by the DDS Restrictive Controls Review Committee.

5. **The DDS Annual Psychiatric Evaluation is no longer required for people receiving services from DDS.**

6. **Sanctions**.

   The requirements for the Psychotropic Medication Review Form are included in Standard 18 (Psychotropic Medications) and Standard 19 (Psychiatric Services) of the Health and Wellness Standards. DDS may impose sanctions on providers who do not comply with the Health and Wellness Standards.

If a medication with psychotropic properties (*e.g.*, a medication that affects or alters thought processes, mood, sleep, or behavior) is used to treat a medical condition (*e.g.* divalproex for treatment of a seizure disorder) and is not being used to also treat a formal mental health diagnosis then the requirements of this transmittal do not apply. Coordination with the primary care provider is recommended.

If you have any questions about this transmittal, please contact: Chioma Nwachukwu, DNP, RN, APHN-BC, Supervisory Nurse Consultant, at (202) 615-8268 (chioma.nwachukwu@dc.gov) or Titilayo Ilori, RN, MSN, Supervisory Nurse Consultant, at 202-590-7536 (titilayo.ilori@dc.gov). You may also contact Dr. Yolanda Van Horn, DDS Clinical Psychologist, at (202) 527-5541 (yolanda.vanhorn@dc.gov).

Attachments:

DDS Psychotropic Medication Review Form-Revised
DDS Psychotropic Medication Review Form: Instructions-Revised