




GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

DDS TRANSMITTAL# 19-17

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

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

DATE: August 30, 2019

RE: Psychotropic Medication Quarterly Review Guidelines for People with Intellectual Disabilities Supported by DDA and Revised Psychotropic Medication Review Form

The Department on Disability Services 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 a revised version of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form. This revised Psychotropic Medication Review Form replaces the form included as Appendix 9 of the DDA Health and Wellness Standards (February 26, 2015).

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 at a minimum of every ninety (90) calendar days.

The DDS Health and Wellness Standards 18 (Psychotropic Medications) and 19 (Psychiatric Services) require that interdisciplinary psychotropic medication reviews be completed at least every 90 days. They can be scheduled more often than 90 days, but not less often.

The purpose of the interdisciplinary 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 whether the medication can be safely continued, and to evaluate whether gradual reductions in medication dosages are warranted.

At a minimum, participants in the interdisciplinary review 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 (BSP) is required for the person then input from the behavior support clinician who developed the behavior support plan is also essential.

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

Page 1 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form is the **Health Review** which is completed by a nurse. Page 2 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form is the **Review of Behavioral Functioning** which must be completed with input from the behavior support clinician, if the person has a behavior support plan (BSP). Pages 1 and 2 must be completed for every medication appointment, including the quarterly appointment for the medication review.

Page 3 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form is the **Physician Report** which must be completed by the prescriber of psychotropic medication at the time of the quarterly medication review and signed by all participants of the psychotropic review meeting.

3. Residential providers and in home support 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.

The DDS provider of residential services is responsible for completing Page 1 and Page 2 of the Psychotropic Medication Review Form for each psychiatry appointment, including the appointment for the quarterly medication review. If the person does not have a residential services provider then the DDS provider that supports the person in the person's home is responsible for completing the form.



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

All three pages of each quarterly Psychotropic Medication Review Form are required to be uploaded to MCIS under “Clinical Services.”

For people with behavior support plans, the two most recent quarterly Psychotropic Medication Review Forms must also be uploaded under the “BSP” tab for review by the Restrictive Controls Review Committee (RCRC) at the time the BSP is uploaded for RCRC review.

The documentation must be uploaded to MCIS by the DDS provider of residential services. If the person does not have a residential services provider then the DDS provider that supports the person in the person’s home is responsible for uploading the documentation to MCIS.

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

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 and (chioma.nwachukwu@dc.gov) or Titilayo Illori, RN, MSN, Supervisory Nurse Consultant, at 202-590-7536 and (titilayo.illori@dc.gov). You may also contact Dr. Yolanda Van Horn, DDS Clinical Psychologist, at (202) 527-5541 and (yolanda.vanhorn@dc.gov).

Attachments:

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