

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

Nursing Division - Administration

**SUBJECT: Telephone, Verbal and Written Medication Orders**

**REFERENCE:** Joint Commission Standard MM.3.20; Nurse Practice Act Guam P.L. 16-123

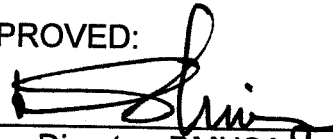
Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date: 6/24/09

History: New

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APPROVED:



Title: Director, DMHSA

**POLICY:**

- Verbal and telephone orders are allowed, however in an effort to reduce medication errors, the use of verbal and telephone orders are discouraged. All healthcare providers qualified to prescribe medication under Guam's Public Laws and approved by DMHSA Director to have admitting privileges at DMHSA will do so by physically entering an order in the consumer's medical record or on a Pharmacy prescription pad.
- Telephone and verbal orders for administration of medications may be received and recorded by the Registered Nurse (RN) or Pharmacist employed at DMHSA. Such orders prescribed verbally or by telephone are to be issued in the best interest of the consumer and therefore will be kept to a minimum. Telephone and verbal orders for medication may be prescribed in the following instances:
  - The prescribing physician has determined that the consumer is in need of medication within a specific time period and he/she is unable to physically write the order in the consumer's medical record due to his/her physical location. To delay administration of the medication would not be in the best interest of the consumer's plan of care and treatment, therefore expedient ordering and administration of the medication is necessary.
  - The prescribing physician has determined that the consumer is in need of medication in an urgent or emergency situation, with verbal/telephone communication presenting the method of accomplishing the order.

**PROCEDURE:**

- Orders given verbally or by telephone for medications and their administration shall be filled only when given by a qualified physician employed by DMHSA or other person duly licensed, authorized to prescribe by DMHSA. All verbal/telephone orders of medication shall be transcribed in writing into the medical chart or, if appropriate, on a prescription form if taken by a Pharmacist.
- All verbal and/or telephone orders for medications shall include the following criteria:
  - Date and time the order is prescribed verbally or via telephone

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- The name of the individual prescribing the drug and his/her licensure (i.e., MD)
  - The generic *or* brand name of the drug
  - Drug dosage (strength or concentration)
  - Quantity and/or duration
  - Route drug is to be administered
  - Frequency of administration
  - Age and weight where this is appropriate for clinical reasons
  - Known allergies (if this has not been determined at the time of the verbal/telephone order)
  - The reason the drug is ordered for the consumer if as needed (PRN)
  - Specific indications for use as appropriate if as needed (PRN)
  - Name and level of licensure of the individual receiving and documenting the order
- Verbal/telephone orders of medication shall be received and recorded by the Pharmacist or Registered Nurse.
  - To prevent medication errors related to verbal/telephone orders, all individuals licensed and approved by DMHSA to receive and record these types of orders must strictly observe the following practices when performing this function. The receiver of the order must:
    - Obtain all criteria information for medication verbal/telephone orders listed above.
    - Write down the complete order and then read it back to the prescriber, receiving confirmation from the prescriber that the order is correct.
    - Spell the name of the drug or request the prescriber to spell the drug if the receiver does not know the spelling.

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- Read back the frequency and/or instructions for use in the non-abbreviated format. Example: If an order is received for BID frequency, the receiver will read the order to the prescriber as “to be administered twice daily, or two times per day”.
- Record the verbal/telephone order immediately in the consumer’s medical record or, for pharmacists, on a prescription form as appropriate.
- Indicate either telephone or verbal order in the written record.
- The Registered Nurse will sign the written record.
- The prescribing practitioner must sign the written record of the verbal / telephone order within 24 hours of giving the order.