

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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SECRETARY

WAYNE E. BLACK  
SR. DIRECTOR FOR SOCIAL SERVICES  
AND COUNTY OPERATIONS

July 17, 2017

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**DEAR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF LICENSED CHILD PLACING AGENCIES**

**ATTENTION: CHILD WELFARE LEADERSHIP AND STAFF**

**SUBJECT: PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING**

Public Law 112-34 - the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act requires States to enact protocols for the appropriate use and monitoring of psychotropic medications. Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC) has released several resources to aid each child placing agency in these efforts.

The *Best Practices for Medication Management for Children & Adolescents in Foster Care*, released in October 2015, provides guidelines that child welfare staff should be aware of to prevent children from experiencing adverse events due to being without or not taking medication. It also offers guidance on the utilization of psychotropic medications including "trigger" criteria that may indicate the need for a formal medication review. A medication review, as outlined on page 11 of the document, for children and youth in foster care is available by CCNC Pharmacists (<https://www.communitycarenc.org/our-networks/>) or by a Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network (<https://www.communitycarenc.org/population-management/pharmacy/community-pharmacy-enhanced-services-network-cpesn/>). Child welfare staff should review the protocols outlined on pages 13-14 in the *Best Practices for Medication Management for Children & Adolescents in Foster Care* document to understand the resources available to assist them in the management of medication. This document is attached and can be located online at <https://www.communitycarenc.org/media/files/foster-care-medication-management-oct.pdf>.

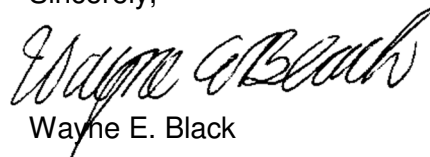
A new resource, *Psychotropic Medications in Children and Adolescents: Guide for Use and Monitoring*, provides additional guidance on the monitoring of psychotropic medication. Child welfare staff and resource parents can use this document to learn more about certain psychotropic medications. It provides a color-coded quick reference guide for each medication, questions to ask a prescriber, and a glossary of terms. This resource also includes FDA approved uses, common evidence-based uses, potential side effects, and medication-specific safety and effectiveness monitoring necessary when prescribed to a child or adolescent. Several psychotropic medications have monitoring requirements that include lab work every three months. Others have potential side effects that could mimic trauma

exposure symptoms such as sleep disturbances, anxiety and/or suicidal ideation. As such, child welfare staff should review the side effects and monitoring requirements of any psychotropic medication children in your custody are taking. Monitoring protocols should be discussed with the child's physician, caregivers, and noted in the case file via the Health Summary forms (DSS-5207; DSS-5208; DSS-5209) and the Monthly Foster Care Record (DSS-5295) to document that appropriate oversight and monitoring occurs.

The Fostering Health NC (FHNC) Program is also available to assist you with questions regarding connecting children and youth in foster care with medical homes well suited to meet their special health care needs. The FHNC website (<http://www.ncped.org/fosteringhealthnc>) has a wealth of information in their Resource Library that can be used by individual staff and short videos that can be shown in staff meetings to increase the knowledge, skills and competencies of your workforce. Your staff is also encouraged to take the two self-paced, online courses, *Fostering Connections I* and *Fostering Connections II*, on ncswLearn.org to improve their ability to ensure children served by the foster care program receive adequate services to meet their physical, mental and dental health needs.

If you have questions, please contact the Fostering Health NC Program directly at 919-839-1156 or [fhnc@ncped.org](mailto:fhnc@ncped.org) or Jeanne Preisler at 336-209-5844 or [Jeanne.Preisler@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jeanne.Preisler@dhhs.nc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne E. Black". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Wayne E. Black

Attachments (2):

Attachment 1 – Best Practices for Medication Management for Children and Adolescents in Foster Care

Attachment 2 – Psychotropic Medications in Children and Adolescents: Guide for Use and Monitoring

CWS-14-2017