



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

EDUARDO J. SANCHEZ, M.D., M.P.H.
COMMISSIONER

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February 15, 2005

Dear Healthcare Provider:

The Texas Department of State Health Services has coordinated the creation of the accompanying best practice guidelines, *Psychotropic Medication Utilization Parameters for Foster Children*, developed by a panel of child and adolescent psychiatrists, psychologists, guideline development specialists, and other mental health experts.

They are based on the most current, evidence-based medical literature. Where medical evidence was limited, the recommendations are based on medical observation and consensus. The clinical committees of the Federation of Texas Psychiatry, Texas Pediatric Society, Texas Academy of Family Physicians, Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, and Texas Medical Association reviewed the guidelines and provided input. The guidelines will be reviewed at least annually and updated as needed.

The guidelines were developed for use in the treatment of foster children who receive services through Medicaid. There are particular clinical and social issues surrounding the care of these children. However, the guidelines may be a valuable resource in the treatment of any child diagnosed with a mental health disorder, regardless of the type of health insurance coverage the child may have.

The guidelines are intended as a resource for physicians and other clinicians. They are not intended as a definitive standard of care. Adherence to the guidelines is voluntary and subject to the physician's independent medical judgment and the clinical needs of the patient. Absent fraud, and except as required by a contract with a health and human services agency, failure to follow the guidelines will not result in penalty to the provider by any Texas Health and Human Services system agency.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is coordinating the development of a physician-directed medical review system to evaluate the medical treatment of foster children who receive Medicaid benefits. The primary goal of the system will be to improve patient care, safety, and outcomes. As review models are developed, the Commission will solicit input from state medical associations, specialty physician organizations, quality assurance professionals and others.

We ask that you consult the accompanying guidelines when there are questions regarding the clinical management of a child who is taking -- or will be taking -- a psychotropic drug. Questions about the guidelines may be directed to Steven Shon, M.D., Medical Director for Mental Health Services, Texas Department of State Health Services, (512) 206-4502 or steven.shon@dshs.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "EJS Sanchez M.D.", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Eduardo J. Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner