

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



**Standard Operating Procedures**

**Policy Name:** Nursing Protocols

**Policy Number:** 507.04.31

**Effective Date:** 1/27/2022

**Page Number:** 1 of 3

**Authority:**  
Commissioner

**Originating Division:**  
Health Services Division  
(Physical Health)

**Access Listing:**  
Level I: All Access

**I. Introduction and Summary:**

All nursing personnel licensed in the State of Georgia will use Nursing Protocols to assess a patient's health status and treat minor conditions. Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) facilities will have a Nursing Procedures Manual available to all nursing staff. This policy is applicable to all facilities that house GDC offenders to include private and county prisons.

**II. Authority:**

- A. O.C.G.A. §§ 43-34-26.1, 43-26-5;
- B. GDC Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): 507.04.30 Direct Orders;
- C. Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 410-14-.01 and 410-11-.01;
- D. NCCHC 2018 Adult Standard: P-E-08; and
- E. ACA Standards: 5-ACI-6A-03 and 4-ALDF-4C-09.

**III. Definitions:**

- A. **Clinical Associate Protocols** - Written clinical guidelines that specify the steps to be taken by a physician assistant or nurse practitioner in evaluating and treating a patient's condition that may include ordering diagnostic tests and Legend Medications. The clinical associate and supervising physician should sign the protocols.
- B. **Nursing Protocols** - Written instructions or guidelines which specify the nursing actions to be taken in the evaluation of a patient's health status and includes treatment of minor conditions.
- C. **Standing Orders** - Pre-established written medical orders for definitive treatment of identified conditions and for on-site treatment of emergency conditions for persons having conditions to which the orders pertain.

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D. **Legend Medications** - Medications requiring a prescription or order by a physician or clinical associate.

**IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:**

A. The approved Nursing Procedures Manual is *Nursing Procedures* by Springhouse Corp., Springhouse, PA, 1992; the contractor/vendor is responsible for purchase.

1. Each facility will have the approved Nursing Procedures Manual available online and in the following locations:

a. Facilities with inpatient nursing units such as Augusta State Medical Prison (ASMP) will have a copy available in all nursing units.

b. Large facilities with an infirmary will have a copy in the general clinic area and the infirmary area.

c. All other facilities will have a copy available at the nurses' station.

2. The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) Office of Health Services will review the Nursing Procedures Manual at a minimum of every three (3) years and communicate necessary changes to the GDC Deputy Director of Medical Audit Services and contract vendor administration.

B. Clinical Associate Protocols: The Chronic Illness Clinic Protocols and Procedure Manual and Clinical Updates approved by the Office of Health Services are defined as clinical protocols for use by the physician, physician assistant, and nurse practitioner. These protocols contain Legend Medications that may be ordered in accordance with regulations of state licensing boards for nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

They establish the Georgia Department of Corrections Standard of Care for evaluation and treatment of selected medical conditions.

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C. Nursing Protocols:

1. Nursing Protocols will be written by the contract vendor and approved by the GDC Statewide Medical Director, dated, signed, and reviewed at least annually.
2. Each protocol will be appropriate to the level of skill and preparation of the nursing personnel who will carry it out.
3. Nursing Protocols will not contain any directions regarding utilization of Legend (prescription) Medications except for those covering emergency, life-threatening situations. (All nurses initiating emergency drug protocols **must be** ACLS certified and have an order from an advanced clinical provider.)
4. Therapeutic measures needed beyond what is indicated in the Nursing Protocol will be initiated only upon a written, verbal, or telephone order from a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
5. A Nursing Protocol Manual will be available in all treatment areas.

D. Standing Orders: Standing Orders will not be used in any Georgia Department of Corrections Facility.

V. **Attachments:** None.

VI. **Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:** None.