
Division of Institutions
Policy and Procedure

Chapter: S
Section: .4300
Title: Medication Duration for Outpatient Services
Issue Date: February 5, 2025
Supersedes: August 17, 2021

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the duration of medication orders for outpatient services.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Chronic Disease Medication

Any drug that is ordered for the treatment of the HIV, diabetes, cardiovascular, pulmonary, mental health, seizures, and TB.

III. POLICY

It is the policy of the North Carolina Department of Adult Correction (DAC), Division of Division of Institutions that:

- A. The duration of a provider order entered into the Electronic Healthcare Record (EHR) shall be as written except when policy dictates a more stringent duration.
- B. If a provider order does not specify a duration of therapy and/or quantity, a limited duration and/or quantity as outlined in this policy shall be automatically applied.
- C. CHS Nursing staff may only continue a chronic disease medication order in the EHR for two weeks past the expiration date while a new order written by the provider is being obtained.
- D. Non-Formulary medications require UR authorization to begin or continue therapy for all offenders, except those upon initial intake at the processing centers, and those who meet the qualifications of the Formulary Restriction(s) for the medication being ordered.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. For initiation of new medications, the order duration should be commensurate with a provider follow-up appointment or reflect a clinically relevant review window to ascertain the effectiveness of the medication.
- B. For established/effective treatments used in stable patients, the order duration may be up to 365 days, unless otherwise restricted by Law, Policies, UR expiration date and/or Sections IV. E. and F.

- C. Refills on active orders for chronic disease medication are generated by the pharmacy application, Medication Refill Tracking System (MRTS). 30-day refills are dispensed up to the expiration date of the order. At the end of the order, not less than a 7-day supply shall be dispensed.
- D. Chronic disease medication orders which have been continued by Nursing staff past the provider-specified expiration date, will be refilled for up to 14 days, or less if specified in the order.
- E. Order durations shall not exceed the following:
 - 1. Initial orders for target-controlled substances for acute pain (STOP ACT) – Max of 5 days
 - 2. Initial orders for target-controlled substances for post-surgery pain (STOP ACT) – Max of 7 days
 - 3. Non-target-controlled substance for pain – Tramadol – 14 days unless UR approved
 - 4. Offenders on chronic pain management with UR approval
 - a) Schedule CII – Up to 30 days
 - b) Schedules CIII through CV – Up to 180 days
 - 5. Benzodiazepines for detoxification – 3 days
 - 6. Antibiotics – 10 days, or 14 days for H.pylori
 - 7. Gabapentinoids - No more than 180 days
 - 8. Anticoagulation Therapy – refer to Clinical Practice Guideline CPG - 6
- F. The following guidelines shall be applied to provider orders written without a duration of therapy:
 - 1. Controlled substance pain management therapy:
 - a) All CII – CV orders with no specified days supply – 3 days
 - b) All PRN CII – CV orders with a quantity specified – 30 days
 - 2. All other medications including non-target-controlled substances – 30 days

V. REFERENCES

A. 5th Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions

5-ACI-6A-18, 5-AC1-6A-43

B. NC Gen. Stat. § [90-106](#)

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