

HEALTHWEST

Practice Guideline

No. 12-005

Prepared by:
Pharmacy Work Group

Effective: July 14, 2004
Revised: April 5, 2018

Approved by:

Subject: Prescribing Psychotropic
Medications for Children and
Adolescents

Julia Rupp, Executive Director

I. **PRACTICE GUIDELINE**

Protocol for Prescribing Psychotropic Medications to Children and Adolescents.

II. **PURPOSE**

To ensure the safe and effective use of psychotropic medications in the treatment of children and adolescents.

III. **APPLICATION**

HealthWest contracts psychiatrists and physician assistants (PA), nurse practitioners (NP), HealthWest registered nurses (RN), and clinical staff.

IV. **PROTOCOL**

- A. Children and adolescents who need mental health services are required to have a face-to-face psychiatric evaluation before psychotropic medications are prescribed. However, the adjusting of medications may not need face-to-face interaction after being seen for a psychiatric evaluation or medication review, unless the Physician/PA/NP determines a need to do so.
- B. Prior to evaluation by a Physician/PA/NP when at all possible, the following documents need to be obtained:
 - 1. A physical examination completed by a primary care physician (PCP) within the previous twelve months.
 - 2. Progress notes from the PCP if possible, especially the most recent notes.
 - 3. Assessment/questionnaire completed by the parent/intake worker.
 - 4. Health screen/review of vitals done by the HealthWest RN that includes blood pressure, heart rate, height, weight, and especially cardiac and lung auscultation with the reports to be given to the Physician/PA/NP at the time of the psychiatric evaluation.
- C. The psychiatric evaluation should consist of a health assessment to be completed by the Physician/PA/NP that specifically addresses the issues of cardiac, liver, and kidney

dysfunction and problems, and any medication the child/adolescent is taking to make sure that there is no drug/drug interaction. In addition, a brief notation regarding the review of the documents obtained especially the health screen and the physical examination and progress notes from the individual's PCP, needs to be documented.

- D. No blood work-up is necessary if the Physician/PA/NP is prescribing stimulants, Strattera, SSRI's, SNRI's, Wellbutrin, or Remeron. Potential drug/drug interactions will be monitored.
- E. A blood work-up is recommended prior to the use of Lithium, anti-convulsants, atypical antipsychotics, and Serzone, and as per protocol outlined in HealthWest Policy/Procedure 06-010.
- F. Copies of all psychiatric evaluations and progress notes should be routinely sent to the individual's PCP. In addition, the PCP should be requested to provide the Physician/PA/NP with progress notes, lab reports, and a list of currently prescribed medications in order to promote effective coordination of care between the PCP and HealthWest Physicians/PAs/NPs. RNs will facilitate this process.

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