Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Rafael López, Secretary

February 18, 2026

Dear Prescriber,

Re: Psychotropic Medication Oversight and Monitoring for Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Care

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to ensuring the safety, well-being, and appropriate treatment of children and youth in our care. We are writing to inform you of important updates to our psychotropic medication oversight and monitoring process. In alignment with national best practices and in recognition of the unique vulnerabilities of children and youth in out-of-home care, DHS has implemented a structured **Psychotropic Medication Review Process** that supports our Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) in making informed decisions when they are the legally designated health care decision maker (HCDM).

As part of this process, recommendations for the use of psychotropic medications will be reviewed by our clinical team, which includes a licensed pharmacist and/or child and adolescent psychiatrist. We're sharing the following information to help support your critical role as a prescriber in this process:

1. When prescribing a psychotropic medication for any child or youth committed to the Department of Human Services, it is essential that you **complete Section A of the Informed Consent Packet** (attached), which will be provided to you by the caseworker. This section captures key information about the medication you are recommending, which you should communicate to the youth and relevant HCDM, and completion of this form will help ensure timely and informed decision-making in the best interest of the child.
2. **Our clinical team may reach out to you** for additional clinical context or clarification about the prescription recommendation, and we appreciate your prompt and timely response.
3. **The LDSS will follow up with you and/or your office to communicate the decision** related to the medication recommendation.

If you have questions about our informed consent procedures, please contact Lisa Horne, Child Welfare Program Nurse Consultant at lisa.horne1@maryland.gov; general questions regarding medical treatment for youth in DHS care can be directed to Dr. Richard Lichenstein, Medical Director, Richard.Lichenstein@maryland.gov.

In Service,

Rafael Lopez
Secretary

Dr. Alger M. Studstill, Jr., Executive Director
Social Services Administration

Frequently Asked Questions: Psychotropic Medication Oversight & Review Process

1. Why am I receiving this communication?
The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to the safety and well-being of children and youth in out-of-home care. This update outlines new enhancements to our psychotropic medication oversight process, which is designed to support safe, effective, and well-informed treatment decisions.

2. What is the role of the Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) in the informed consent process?
When DHS, through the LDSS, is the legally designated health care decision maker (HCDM), the LDSS is responsible for reviewing and providing informed consent for psychotropic medications. Your clinical expertise informs this decision.

3. What is the purpose of the Psychotropic Medication Review Process?
This process supports the LDSS in providing informed consent by incorporating a clinical review from a licensed pharmacist and/or child and adolescent psychiatrist.

4. What do I need to complete when prescribing a psychotropic medication for a child in out-of-home care?
You'll be asked to complete **Section A** of the Informed Consent Packet (provided to you by the caseworker). This section captures essential details about the medication being recommended, and your thorough completion helps ensure timely review.

5. Can I recommend a dose range on the form?
Yes. You may include a clinically appropriate dosage range on the form. When a dose range is documented and approved through the informed consent process, you do not need to seek additional consent to titrate the medication up or down within that range. However, if the medication changes or the recommended dosage falls outside of the approved range, new informed consent will be required.

6. Will I be contacted by the DHS clinical review team?
You may be contacted if additional clinical information or clarification is needed in order to provide informed consent.

7. How will I know if the medication has been approved?
The LDSS will follow up with you and/or your office to confirm the decision.