



State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families

Charlie Crist  
Governor

George H. Sheldon  
Secretary

DATE: October 3, 2008

TO: Regional Directors

THROUGH: *John Cooper*  
John Cooper, Acting Assistant Secretary for Operations  
*David Fairbanks*  
David Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs

FROM: *Patricia Badland*  
Patricia Badland, Director of Office of Family Safety

SUBJECT: Reporting of Psychotherapeutic Medications and related information in FSFN

**PURPOSE:** This memorandum provides information on periodic reports to the legislature on the psychotherapeutic medication of children served by Florida child welfare, and requests assistance from the field to assure reliable and valid data is available for reporting.

**BACKGROUND:** In February 2007 the Department began to provide reports at the request of Senate staff on Ensuring Appropriate and Informed Use of Psychotherapeutic Medications for Florida's Children in DCF Care and Custody. Attached is the September 2008 report for your use.

**CURRENT SITUATION:** The Department has improved its ability to collect and report information on the prescription of these medications through Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN). As reported to the Senate, FSFN now supports tracking of:

- ✓ medications prescribed to children and youth in the Department's custody for psychotherapeutic purpose,
- ✓ if the child's parents or legal guardian have provided express and informed consent for the medication, or if a court order was issued to allow the Department to provide the medication,<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ the date a consent or court order was provided,
- ✓ the diagnosis used in prescribing the medication,
- ✓ when the medication was begun and stopped, and
- ✓ the dosage and number of refills.

Related information, specifically the date when the child received his or her most recent Comprehensive Behavioral Health Assessment (CBHA), should also be available in FSFN.

<sup>1</sup> Parental express and informed consent or a court order is required in almost all cases prior to a child or youth in the custody of the department being provided any psychotherapeutic medication. S.39.407(3), F.S.

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Mission: Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

In preparation for the most recent psychotherapeutic medications report to the legislature, we conducted a desk review of information in FSFN on the Medication and Medical pages for a sample of children receiving psychotherapeutic medication. The sample included all 37 of the children ages birth through 5 years, and 58 children and youth randomly selected across other ages. The results of this desk review are as follows.

1. Certain basic information on these medications appears to be consistently entered;
  - medication name,
  - if it was prescribed as a psychotherapeutic medication,
  - the date prescribed,
  - if there was parental consent or a court order.
2. However, other important information was generally missing. Of the sample reviewed,
  - 14% provided some information on the diagnosis used to prescribe the medications,
  - 10% included the date of the last CBHA, and
  - 12% indicated the immunizations were up to date.
3. Diagnosis information, when it existed, was entered into text boxes, not in the Axis I and Axis II diagnosis fields as per FSFN guidelines.
4. Over 99% of the sampled children and youth had either parental express and informed consent or a court order for the medication; however, many did not have the date of the consent or court order recorded.

Missing data, data entered into the wrong fields, or incomplete data limits reporting and verification capability for the required Senate report, as well as for other programmatic purposes.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please share this information with circuit administrators, CBC lead agencies, supervisors, and all other appropriate staff. Proper training and supervisory review should occur to ensure accurate and appropriate documentation of medications in FSFN.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** If you have any questions about the psychotherapeutic medication data requirements or the topic in general, please contact Frank Platt in the Office of Family Safety. Mr. Platt can be reached at [frank\\_platt@dcf.state.fl.us](mailto:frank_platt@dcf.state.fl.us), or at 850-922-2860.

#### Attachment

cc: Circuit Administrators  
CBC CEO's  
CBC Contract Managers