

SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH SYSTEM
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY SERVICES

DATE: November 25, 1991

BHRS Policy: 91-19

SUBJECT: Dispensing of Prescription Drugs by Registered Nurses

AUTHORITY: Board of Registered Nurses; Divisional

SUPERSEDES: Prior Established Practice

AMENDED: October 14, 2009, January 2011, January 2012, Technical Edits August 31, 2017

This policy establishes a standardized procedure for medication dispensing by registered nurses in the outpatient setting.

POLICY

- A. Function – Dispensing of prescription drugs by registered nurses.
- B.
 - 1. Setting – Outpatient Behavioral Health Clinic
 - 2. Supervision – None required at the time of dispensing of the drug. Overall supervision is provided by the Medical Director and Regional Medical Chief.
 - 3. Registered nurses may dispense prescription drugs under valid prescription from a person lawfully authorized to prescribe. In BHRS, the prescription must be written by a psychiatrist working within the county system or by a nurse practitioner or physician working within the San Mateo County Health System.

PROTOCOL

- A. Definition – Dispensing is the furnishing of drugs upon the valid prescription of a person lawfully authorized to prescribe

B. Data Base

1. Subjective – The patient does not have a personal and/or family history which would contraindicate the drug being dispensed. The patient is not currently experiencing side effects which could contraindicate use of the drug or necessitate a change in dosage.
2. Objective – All agency required observation, examination, tests and procedures relative to the drug being dispensed are performed, and there are no contraindications.

C. Assessment – The drug can be dispensed.

D. Plan

1. Prepare and affix label on the drug being dispensed with the following information.
 - a. Agency name, address and telephone number
 - b. Patient's name
 - c. Name of the prescriber and initials of the dispenser
 - d. Date of issue
 - e. Trade or generic name of the drug
 - f. Quantity and strength of the drug
 - g. Directions for use
 - h. Expiration date of the drug's effectiveness
2. Affix appropriate auxiliary labels.
3. Packaging of drugs that are not pre-packaged will conform to San Mateo County packaging standards for physicians.
4. Ascertain patient's understanding and provide, as needed, appropriate information including: common side effects, benefits, risks, possible serious or harmful effects, directions for taking the drug, and what to do and whom to contact if side effects occur.
5. Hand out any manufacturer-prepared information required by the FDA.

- E. Record Keeping – the following information must be documented in the patient’s record:
1. Patient’s name, current address and phone number
 2. Name, dosage, route of administration and amount of drug that was dispensed.
 3. Other identification and information deemed essential by the registered nurse to be included.
- F. Deviation from Prescription – An amount of medication smaller than that prescribed may be dispensed upon the judgment of the nurse. Rationale for this action will be documented in the patient record, and conveyed to the prescriber as soon as possible.
- G. Consultation – Immediately contact the prescriber, or other MD if prescriber is not available, if the subjective and/or objective findings contraindicate the dispensing of the item.

RESTRICTIONS

- A. Medications may be dispensed only when the stock has been delivered by a pharmacy upon the order of a psychiatrist working in a county site.
- B. Medi-sets may be filled with:
1. Medications prescribed by a psychiatrist working in a county site that have been delivered by a pharmacy (or are available through samples),
 2. Medications prescribed by a nurse-practitioner or physician working in the San Mateo County Health System that have been delivered by a pharmacy.
 - The BHRS nurse must verify the orders by the nurse practitioner or physician before filling the medi-set.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTERED NURSES

- A. Education, Training and Experience – Completion of the agency’s in-service program on dispensing.
- B. Initial Evaluation – Successful completion of the in-service and a demonstration of competency to the satisfaction of the Regional Medical Chief.
- C. Ongoing evaluation – Annual peer review / performance appraisal including observation of the nurse dispensing drugs.

DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE STANDARDIZED PROCEDURE

This standardized procedure was developed collaboratively by nursing, administration, and medicine. The standardized procedure was approved by the following:

Approved: Signature on File

Stephen Kaplan, LCSW
BHRIS Director

Approved: Signature on File

Robert Cabaj, MD
BHRIS Medical Director