

# HEALTH SERVICES POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL

North Carolina Department Of Correction  
Division Of Prisons

SECTION: Care and Treatment of Patient -  
Medication Administration

POLICY # TX II-3

PAGE 1 of 2

SUBJECT: Valid Orders and Treatment Protocols

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 2012  
SUPERCEDES DATE: December 2008

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## References

**Related ACA Standards**

**4<sup>th</sup> Edition Standards for adult Correctional  
Institutions 4-4378**

## PURPOSE

To provide guidelines for valid orders and treatment protocols.

## POLICY

Treatment administered by health care personnel other than a physician, dentist, or other licensed, independent provider must be pursuant to a valid written or verbal order from a person authorized by law to prescribe such service, drug, or device. Physician assistants and nurse practitioners may practice within the limits of State laws and regulations promulgated by the North Carolina Board of Medical Examiners and pursuant to P-3 "Use of Physician Extenders."

## PROCEDURE

### 1. Valid Orders

- a. A valid written order is a verbal or written directive for treatment from a provider in the Division of Prisons and recorded in the inmate's (patient's) medical record.
- b. A valid order directs health care personnel to carry out a specific treatment or medical procedure on a given patient.
- c. Valid orders may be issued in the form of a verbal or telephone order to a licensed nurse and ~~so~~ written on the physician's order sheet (DC-752; DC-834).
- d. Verbal or telephone orders must be signed and dated by the attending physician at the next visit to the outpatient facility or within 24 business hours in an inpatient unit.

### 2. Nursing Protocols

- a. A protocol is a precise and detailed plan for a regimen of therapy. In the DOP, a nursing protocol gives specific sequential instructions for diagnosing a complaint and treating it consistently throughout the system. These protocols guide the nurse through taking the history of the complaint and performing a physical assessment to determine an intervention(s) that ensures, insofar as possible, the patient's comfort and safety.
- b. Nursing protocols are developed by the Nursing Protocol Committee and approved by the Director of Nursing, the Division of Prisons Deputy Medical Director, and the **Chief** of Health Services.
- c. After the protocol(s) is reviewed, signed, and dated by the **Chief** of Health Services, the protocol, in its final approved form, may be employed by the facility for the treatment of inmates who are housed there.
- d. Each protocol shall be appropriate to the level of skill and preparation of the practitioner who implements it and must comply with the relevant State Nurse Practice Acts.

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3. Telephone Triage Protocols
  - a. Registered nurses may implement telephone triage protocols as specified in Health Services Policy TX I-8 "Telephone Triage."
  - b. Telephone protocols are approved by the Chief of Health Services.
4. Standing Orders
  - a. Standing orders are medical directives that may be implemented by the nurse in the absence of physician intervention under the auspices of the nursing protocols and the Chronic Disease Guidelines which have been signed by the Medical Director.
  - b. Standing orders should be the same in all outpatient facilities to maintain and consistent standard of care for patients in the handling and treatment of sick call complaints and disease processes.
  - c. Standing orders will adhere to current formulary guidelines and will be approved by the Chief of Health Services and Deputy Medical Director after review by the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, the Nursing Protocol Committee, and/or the Guidelines Committee.
  - d. Once approved and signed by the Chief of Health Services Director, the standing order will be implemented.
  - e. A registered nurse will review and sign all encounter forms when nursing protocols, including standing orders, were employed by a licensed practical nurse in the facility.



1/31/12

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Paula Y. Smith, MD, Director of Health Services

Date

SOR: Director of Pharmacy  
Deputy Medical Director  
Director of Nursing