

Psychotropic Drugs in Mental Health Services (Policies and Procedures on the Use of)

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Functional Sub group Clinical/ Patient Services - Mental Health

Summary Outlines the need for policies and procedures to be developed for the use of psychotropic drugs in mental health services.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Community Health Centres, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Public Health System, Community Health Centres, Health Associations Unions, Health Professional Associations and Related Organisations, Public Hospitals, Tertiary Education Institutes

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Director-General

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is **mandatory** for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

CIRCULAR

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ON THE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

This Circular outlines the need for policies and procedures to be developed for the use of psychotropic drugs in mental health services.

All personnel involved in the handling, prescribing, administration or control of drugs in mental health services should observe the contents not only of this document, but also of Information Bulletin 92/26 "Definition of Legal Responsibility and Professional Accountability of Mental Health Professionals" and of Circular 90/09 "Drug Usage in Public Hospitals and Public Health Institutions".

For advice on matters relating specifically to the Poisons Act 1966 or Regulations, to Circular 2001/64, or on drug matters in general, unrelated to mental health services, contact should be made with the Duty Pharmacist, Pharmaceutical Services Section of the Department of Health on (02) 9879-3214, or in writing to the Chief Pharmacist, P.O. Box 380, North Ryde 2113.

B.J. Amos,
Director-General

Distributed in accordance with circular list(s):

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DRUG USAGE IN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

SPECIALIST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

1. Introduction

Staff in all mental health facilities and Community Mental Health teams are strongly advised to obtain copies of the Psychotropic Drug Guidelines, published by the Victorian Medical Postgraduate Foundation, as a reference on recommended drug dosages.

Victorian Medical Postgraduate Foundation
22 Lascelles Avenue
TOORAK VIC 3142

Phone: (03) 240 8671

2. Drug Committees

- * In addition to Drug Committees established in Psychiatric Hospitals, and General Hospitals which have a Psychiatric Unit, **Community Mental Health Services must be able to access and participate in either an inpatient based Drug Committee (either Hospital or Mental Health), and/or develop a community-based, Area-wide, Drug Committee specifically for the needs of Community Mental Health Services.**
- * The composition of the Area based Drug Committee should be comparable to that of inpatient Drug Committees, i.e. a Pharmacist, Psychiatrist, and representative of the nursing profession, and other personnel deemed to be relevant.
- * Decisions concerning the use and administration of medication made by the Committee should be distributed **in writing** to **all** community mental health teams in the Area and prominently displayed for the information of staff.

3. Rapid Tranquillisation

- * **All inpatient facilities should have clear written policies and procedures for the use of rapid tranquillisation, and a Journal in which the use of rapid tranquillisation is recorded.**

* **The Journal should include information on the following:**

- Patient's name, D.O.B., diagnosis, date of admission, date of administration of rapid tranquillisation, reason for administering same, medication and dosages administered, and the frequency and times of administration, and frequency and types of observations required.
- Any side-effects and/or complications must also be noted.
- Entries must be dated and signed by the prescribing medical practitioner.

4. Policies and Procedures on Medication - Community Services

- * Each Community Mental Health Team should have **written policies and procedures** for the storage, prescribing, administration and monitoring of medication.