



Nathan Deal, Governor

Clyde L. Reese, III, Esq., Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Services • Family & Children Services • Ron Scroggy, Division Director  
Two Peachtree Street, NW • Suite 19-490 • Atlanta, GA 30303 • 404-651-8409 • 404-657-5105

April 1, 2013

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** County Departments of Family and Children Services  
DFCS Regional Directors  
State Office Staff

**FROM:** Ron Scroggy, Division Director

**RE:** Guidelines for Psychotropic Medication Use in Children and Adolescents AND Informed Consent

### Purpose:

The purpose of this memorandum and the attached document: Guidelines for Psychotropic Medication Use in Children and Adolescents is to:

- I. Achieve improvement in the practice of securing informed consent prior to the administration of all psychotropic medication for children and adolescents in foster care;
- II. Assure that in the medications administered to children and adolescents in foster care are medically necessary, achieve the desired benefits/outcomes and are reduced or discontinued when no longer required;
- III. Identify exceptions to securing informed consent prior to medication administration; and Promote positive clinical outcomes through increased understanding, compliance, and empowerment of staff, caregivers, and recipients.

### Discussion

The Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) requires that all children in foster care who are receiving psychotropic medication be monitored in a manner that ensures their continued safety and well-being. Research has demonstrated that there are a disproportionate number of children in foster care who are prescribed psychotropic medication as compared to the general population of children.

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) strives to ensure children's safety, permanency, and well-being when in DFCS custody and boarded in out of home placement, as well as when permanency is achieved. When reunification is identified as the permanency goal, safety is ensured by the promotion of increased parental capacity of families to maintain children diagnosed with mental illness within their own families and communities. The administration of psychotropic medication to address cognitive, behavioral and emotional needs may be one part of a child's therapeutic treatment plan.

The following attachments detail the requirements and responsibilities of county DFCS staff in meeting the ACYF requirements for a statewide Psychotropic Medication Plan to include informed consent in the administration of psychotropic medication:

- I. Guidelines for Psychotropic Medication Use in Children and Adolescents
- II. Psychotropic Medication Management-Consent Process Flow Chart
- III. Authorization for Psychotropic Medication (Consent Form)
- IV. Foster Care Individual Child Medication Log

\*\*\*Please note that a Medication Administration Record (MAR) may be used by some Child Caring Institutions and Child Placing Agencies and is an appropriate substitute for the Foster Care Individual Child Medication Log.

### **Implementation**

These new procedures are effective as of May 1, 2013. A Web-Ex will be scheduled two weeks from today, April 15, 2013, to address any questions that you may have regarding the guidelines, consent process, or forms. Web-Ex information will be sent via email. Questions may be forwarded to your Clinical Program Specialist or Ursula Davis at [umdavis@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:umdavis@dhr.state.ga.us) prior to the Web-Ex in preparation for the session.