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| Health Care Agency Behavioral Health Services Policies and Procedures | Section Name: | Care and Treatment |
| | Sub Section: | Practice Guidelines |
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| | SIGNATURE | DATE APPROVED |
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| Deputy Director Behavioral Health Services | <u>Signature on File</u> | <u>2/9/2024</u> |

SUBJECT: BHS Outpatient Clinic Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners

PURPOSE:

To provide uniform procedures for Behavioral Health Services (BHS) Adult and Older Adult (AOA) and Children and Youth Services (CYS) County-operated outpatient clinic psychiatric Nurse Practitioners’ prescribing practices and supervision of their medication furnishing services by AOA and CYS psychiatrists.

POLICY:

The Health Care Agency (HCA) allows Nurse Practitioners (NPs) to work in the County-operated outpatient AOA and CYS behavioral health clinics in accordance with the Standardized Procedures for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners in Orange County Health Care Agency, which are developed by an interdisciplinary committee of Orange County HCA psychiatrists, nurses, and administrators. The Standardized Procedures are a legal mechanism for Nurse Practitioners to perform functions which would otherwise be considered the practice of medicine and they are written in compliance with the California Code of Regulations and the California Business and Professions Code (BPC).

SCOPE:

These procedures shall apply to all NPs providing treatment in Behavioral Health Services (BHS) AOA and CYS County-operated outpatient clinics.

REFERENCES:

[Business and Professions Code \(BPC\) Division 2, Chapter 6 Nursing, §§ 2725, 2834-2836, 2863.1](#)

[California Code of Regulations \(CCR\) Title 16 – Professional and Vocational Regulations §§ 1470-1474, and 1481-1485](#)

[Health Care Agency / Behavioral Health Services / Standardized Procedures for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners in Orange County Health Care Agency MHRs](#)

PROCEDURE:

- I. Each psychiatrist and NP dyad shall sign an official copy of the Standardized Procedures for Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners in Orange County Health Care Agency BHS Outpatient Programs (hereby referred to as Standardized Procedures), which must be kept by the Service Chief indicating the psychiatrist is supervising the NP. Standardized Procedures should be completed for all supervisory dyads, and are valid until superseded by the next update or until there is indication on the Standardized Procedures that the supervision relationship has been rescinded. In situations where there is more than one supervising psychiatrist for an NP, all supervising psychiatrists will be required to sign the Standardized Procedures.
- II. The Service Chief shall work with the NP and supervising psychiatrist to coordinate the supervision schedules.
 - A. The NP and psychiatrist dyad are required to be both present at the same time or an arrangement shall be made for the supervising psychiatrist to be on call for telephone contact. The NP is to consult with the supervising psychiatrist on any clinical situations that exceed the NP's scope of practice. Additional situations that require the NP to notify the supervising psychiatrist are described in the Standardized Procedures.
 - B. Time shall be made available in the psychiatrist's and NP's schedule to ensure that regularly scheduled weekly supervision with the supervising psychiatrist will occur. Weekly supervision should include a review of new beneficiaries and medication changes of beneficiaries that were seen the previous week.
 - C. Arrangements for alternative supervision for the NP will be made with another designated psychiatrist when the supervising psychiatrist is not available, such as unexpected sick time, scheduled vacation or other absence.
- III. Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner Training
 - A. NPs are required to have completed an advanced study in nursing (i.e., Master's degree in Nursing with specialty in psychiatry). The training must have been completed prior to employment as an NP with HCA BHS.
 - B. The NP needs to be licensed by the State of California Board of Registered Nursing and possess a California State issued certificate as a Nurse Practitioner.
 - C. The NP shall possess a California State issued furnishing number to prescribe medications and document services, as well as a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) number.
- IV. Chart Documentation
 - A. NP chart documentation including progress notes and medication list entries, shall not require a co-signature by a psychiatrist. The supervising psychiatrist shall

periodically review NP documentation and medication orders to provide feedback and ensure that proper documentation and prescribing protocol are being followed.

- B. If the NP consults with a non-supervising psychiatrist for a beneficiary, then the NP should document in the chart a progress note that the consultation was obtained.

V. Standard Procedures Required for Nurse Practitioners

- A. The Standardized Procedures shall be a specific and standardized procedure that refers to functions that the NP is allowed to perform in the BHS outpatient clinics, including the initial assessment, follow up assessment and treatment of beneficiaries/clients in accordance with the HCA BHS Prescribing Practice Guidelines.
- B. NPs must operate within the scope of their nursing license and may only furnish drugs as authorized by the HCA BHS NP Standardized Procedures.
- C. Each clinic location must maintain a current copy of the HCA BHS NP Standardized Procedures for reference.
- D. The NP Standardized Procedure will be reviewed annually and revised, if needed, by the HCA BHS Outpatient Program administration, supervising psychiatrists, and NPs.

VI. Furnishing

- A. Psychiatric Nurse Practitioners “furnish” medications in accordance with the most current HCA BHS Standardized Procedures and Prescribing Guidelines. Furnishing is analogous to psychiatrists prescribing medications.
- B. Medication prescriptions furnished by the NP do not require a co-signature by a psychiatrist.