



PRISONS
Health and Wellness Services
Policies and Procedures

Title	Starter Dose		
Section	TX II-5	Issue Date June 23, 2021	Supersedes Date January 2017

References

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions, 5th Edition 5-ACI-6A-43 (M); North Carolina Administrative Code 21 NCAC 46.1414

I. PURPOSE

To provide short term quantities of medications for the timely initiation of therapy until the balance of the medication order can be secured from a Department of Public Safety (DPS) Prisons Health and Wellness Pharmacy.

II. POLICY

- (a) Offenders shall receive timely initiation of therapy for provider prescribed medications.
- (b) Nurse manger/designee in collaboration with the Director of Pharmacy/designee shall be responsible for ensuring nursing staff have received training.

III. PROCEDURE

- (a) Inventory
 - (1) Starter dose medications shall be selected from a standardized starter dose inventory list determined by Central Pharmacy. The starter dose inventory list shall represent a variety of therapeutic categories.
 - (2) Controlled Substances shall be excluded from the Starter Dose Program.
 - (3) A facility’s final starter dose medication selections shall be coordinated with the facility provider(s) and the applicable Pharmacy. The selection represents the facility’s most commonly prescribed drugs deemed critical for immediate therapy.
- (b) Packaging and Labeling
 - (1) A preprinted starter dose label shall be attached to each starter dose container.
 - (2) Each starter dose shall be assigned a unique prescription number.



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- (3) Upon end product verification of the final starter dose drug product, pharmacists shall ensure the inclusion of all necessary information as required by state rules and regulations.
- (c) Storage
 - (1) The facility shall store all starter dose medications for medical and mental health treatment in the same location, preferably where the order processing takes place.
 - (2) Starter dose drugs for dental clinics shall be stored in the dental clinic.
 - (3) The starter dose medication inventory shall be secured with key or combination lock to deny access to unauthorized persons.
 - (4) Storage for starter dose drugs except Naloxone is separate from other drug inventories, i.e., stock, emergency or non-prescription drugs.
- (d) Quantity per Container
 - (1) Shall be limited to the short-term therapy of four (4) days in accordance with the North Carolina Board of Pharmacy rules and regulations.
 - (2) Drug quantities per container are determined by calculating the most commonly prescribed dosing regimens for the drug.
 - (3) Inventory levels per drug shall be determined by the frequency of use at the facility.
 - (4) Unit of use items, i.e., inhalers, injectables, parenterals, which are issued as whole containers shall be exempt from the four (4) day quantity guideline.
- (e) Order Processing
 - (1) Starter Dose drugs shall be issued from the starter dose program by licensed medical or nursing staff upon the initiation of a provider’s order identified as “Start Now”.
 - (2) The starter dose drug issuance shall be documented on the applicable Starter Dose Log Sheet.
 - (3) The starter dose RX number shall be documented in the patient’s health care record.



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- (4) Each drug shall be documented on a separate Starter Dose Log Sheet and shall be faxed to the applicable Pharmacy immediately when the starter is pulled.
 - (5) Starter dose drugs shall be obtained from a nearby facility if licensed health and wellness staff are not available at the facility or the facility does not have a starter dose program.
 - (6) The facility that pulls the starter dose shall enter the starter dose RX number into the patient health care record and shall be responsible for faxing the Starter Dose Log Sheet to the applicable Pharmacy.
 - (7) Licensed nursing staff shall complete the appropriate patient information on the starter dose label prior to administering to the patient.
 - (8) When a starter dose is required on a refill of a medication a new order shall be obtained from a provider and entered into the patient health care record as a “Start Now” order.
- (e) Replenishment by Pharmacy
- (1) The applicable facility Pharmacy shall replace the starter dose when the Starter Dose Log Sheet is faxed to a DPS Pharmacy.
 - (2) The starter dose information is entered into the corresponding patient’s profile to provide medication tracking by a pharmacy staff.
- (f) Receipt and Accountability
- (1) Facility nursing staff shall immediately enter the receipt of starter dose replacements on the corresponding Starter Dose Log Sheet.
 - (2) The inability to reach the starter par level is an indication to the facility nurse that a discrepancy has occurred and needs to be resolved.
 - (3) Each facility shall complete a weekly Starter Audit Form by counting the actual quantity on hand and forwarding the Starter Audit Form to the pharmacy.
 - (4) A Pharmacist shall review the Starter Audit Form for discrepancies and if discrepancies are noted, a Starters On Grid form shall be completed and faxed to the facility nurse for processing.



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- (5) The facility nurse shall process the Starters On Grid form and fax the Starter Dose Log Sheet to the requesting pharmacy.
 - (6) A Pharmacist shall transfer and replace the starter associated with the discrepancy on the Starter On Grid form.
 - (7) The facility shall use the oldest starter first in order to avoid having expired medications.
 - (8) Expired starter doses shall be documented on the corresponding Starter Dose Log Sheet and returned to the Pharmacy for replacement.
 - (9) Unused tablets/capsules resulting from medication orders not requiring the full starter dose quantity shall be placed in a medication envelope labeled with the starter dose prescription number and the name of the medication and returned to the Pharmacy for crediting.
- (g) Facilities shall maintain starter dose packing slips for ninety (90) days and completed Starter Dose Log Sheets for three (3) years.

 Todd E. Ishee
 Commissioner of Prisons

June 23, 2021

 Date