

Dear Foster Parent or Relative Care Giver,

As a care giver for the child placed in your home, you play an essential role in providing care and information regarding your child's medical, behavioral and mental health issues.

This letter is to inform you of important changes in Oregon's Psychotropic Medication Policy in child welfare. These changes may have an impact on children in your care who may be or have been prescribed a psychotropic medication used to help treat mental health, emotional or behavioral issues.

Important laws were passed in the 2009 legislative session which impact the way we are required to manage these medications.

The first change is the new requirement for a mental health assessment before a licensed medical professional prescribes more than one new psychotropic medication or any anti-psychotic medication.

This change ensures that the children in our care have the appropriate assessment and diagnosis early in their course of treatment, and this rule does not apply to situations that are considered to be urgent. Urgent medical need means "the onset of psychiatric symptoms requiring professional attention within 48 hours to prevent a serious deterioration in a child or young adult's mental or physical condition."

Your caseworker will have information about the referral process for a mental health assessment, should a child in your care require one under this new policy.

The second change is the new requirement for consent. Consent is the process of getting information about the medication and making a decision to agree to administration of the medication. Beginning in July 2010, all new prescriptions for psychotropic medications will require a signed consent from the DHS branch supervisor before the prescription may be filled. This change means that the foster parent will no longer be able to provide consent for these kinds of medications.

5/19/2010

Beginning in July, you will be asked to take a “medication packet” with you to all medical and mental health appointments for a child in your care. That packet will contain new consent forms and fax cover sheets for your licensed medical professional to use if and when the decision is made to prescribe psychotropic medications.

The medical provider will complete the consent form and fax it to the DHS branch office for signed consent. Consent must be obtained for any new prescription for a psychotropic medication.

You may take the prescription slip with you after the appointment, but you **may not fill** the prescription (pick up the medication from a pharmacy) until the branch informs you that consent has been given. The expected turnaround time for consent is within 3 working days.

We have included a flow chart diagram of the new consent process with this letter, and we ask you to familiarize yourself with the steps – especially if you are caring for a child who is taking one of these medications.

Above all, I want to express how much we appreciate the contribution you make every day in the lives of our state’s most vulnerable children. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you to help them grow into healthy adults.

We appreciate your help with these important changes in order to provide better medical care and treatment for children in Oregon. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Teri Shultz, RN 503-945-6620, or e-mail TSHULTZ@DHS.STATE.OR.US.