

Frequently Asked Questions: Informed Consent for Youth in Children's Division Custody

- **What is informed consent?**

Informed consent is a Children's Division (CD) practice used to ensure youth in state custody receive excellent medical care. Simply put, informed consent means a child's case manager has approved the administration of their psychotropic or antipsychotic medication. However, there are often many steps involved, including the collection of documentation, assent of the youth (12+) and their parent(s), and an understanding of the recommended treatment.

- **When is informed consent needed?**

Informed consent is necessary when a provider determines a youth in state custody needs a psychotropic medication to help treat a behavioral-health disorder. Psychotropic medications include:

- Antipsychotics
- Antidepressants
- Lithium
- Stimulants
- Alpha agonists (e.g. clonidine or guanfacine)
- Anxiolytics/hypnotics (benzodiazepines & non-benzodiazepines)
- Anticonvulsants or mood stabilizers

**A psychotropic medication may be any medicine that affects the mind, emotions or behavior. In addition to the categories above, other medicines, including herbal remedies, may be used that affect mind, emotions or behavior.*

- **What information is needed for informed consent to be given?**

- The nature, purpose, and recommended dosage of the treatment
- The child's diagnosis
- Is the medication for off-label use?
- What are the possible side effects and adverse reactions?
- Whether there will be required follow-up or monitoring
- Are there any alternatives or non-pharmacological intervention methods available?
- What is the prognosis without an intervention?

- **Is that the only information CD will need from me?**

If a Mandatory or Secondary Review is required, more information will be needed from you. In these cases, the Children's Division will need the following documents prior to issuing informed consent:

- A prescriber note with the recommendation, dosage, and reason for prescribing
- The child's current medication list
- Any admission or discharge paperwork for the child
- Any recent lab results for the child

- **Is there a difference between a Mandatory Review & a Secondary Review?**

A mandatory review is required when a youth's situation or medication recommendation meets certain criteria. A secondary review is required when the child (12+), parent(s), or a member of the child's CD Care Team is not in agreement with the proposed treatment or if they have concerns that might be answered with a review. Both types of review may request the same information from you.

- **What if the review doesn't support the recommended treatment?**

If the recommendations state some concern regarding the treatment, the case manager will have a discussion with the prescriber regarding the concerns to determine if they will consent or if another course of treatment would be a better option.

- **What if it is an emergency?**

A qualified prescriber may administer emergency medication without informed consent when:

- The life, safety, or health of the child is at risk
- The lives, safety, or health of others are at risk
- Preventing serious harm to the child or others
- Treating current or imminent substantial suffering

If the medication will be more than PRN, the informed consent process will need to be initiated after the emergency administration has begun.

- **What if I am unable to reach the case worker?**

The Children's Division has a dedicated Health Information Specialist (HIS) Unit to help you if you are unable to reach a case worker or if you have any questions. Your county has two assigned HIS workers that you can [find on our map](#). You can also send medical records, informed consent requests, or general questions to CD.medrecords@dss.mo.gov, if you cannot reach someone or if you do not know who to contact.