

Community
Representation

Medical



Legal



Pharmacy



Behavioral Health



CEO/Vice-President



State Agency



Foster Parents



Psychotropic Medication Advisory Committee



Annual Report

2021

Commitment of community members to the effective prescription and administration of psychotropic medications to children in foster care.

Children's Division

The Department of Social Services has several Divisions that provide a variety of programs and services to promote, safeguard, and protect the general welfare of children in the State of Missouri. One of these Division's is the Children's Division.

The Children's Division's primary responsibility is the administration and management of the programs for children who are in the legal custody of the state.

The goal of the services provided within these programs is to keep children safe through investigation, intervention, prevention, early child care, adoption and foster care.

The Children's Division's mission is to empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives.

PMAC 2021 Meetings

The PMAC held six (6) meetings, all of which were conducted virtually.

Each meeting was scheduled for a minimum of three (3) hours.

The PMAC members/participants received a Webex invite, with the agenda, the previous meeting minutes, and any documents that would be part of the PMAC meeting.

A copy of each agenda was published as required by Missouri Sunshine Law on a State of Missouri's website to serve as a notice to the public of the meeting and the topics.

When the agenda and meeting minutes were reviewed/approved by the PMAC members, they were placed on the DSS website as: [PMAC Agenda and Minutes](#).

Introduction



On June 17, 2017, The Children's Division (CD) became involved in litigation regarding the use of psychotropic medication and children in foster care. The litigation was filed by several children, on behalf of all children in CD custody who presently are, or in the future will be, prescribed or administered one or more psychotropic medications while in state care, and it sought changes in how CD manages psychotropic medications and medical records for children in its custody. CD collaborated with several public agencies to further address the needs of children on psychotropic medication while in the custody of CD. Those best practice protocols were included in a [Joint Settlement Agreement](#) (Agreement), along with data measures.

On July 15, 2019, an order granting preliminary approval for the Agreement was issued. In addition to the preliminary approval, the order provided all prospective class members and their legal representatives receive notice of the proposed Agreement. Any individual who had comments regarding the Agreement could write to Class Counsel and/or attend the fairness hearing.

On November 20, 2019, the fairness hearing was held in Kansas City, Missouri. The courts reviewed any written/verbal comments to determine if the Agreement was reasonable, fair and adequate and should receive the court's final approval.

On December 5, 2019, the "Order Granting Final Approval of the Class Action Settlement" was signed and dated by United States District Judge Nanette Laughrey. The court retained jurisdiction of the Agreement for the purposes of enforcing the terms/requirements of the Agreement.

A requirement within the Agreement is to appoint and maintain a Psychotropic Medication Advisory Committee (PMAC). The purpose of the PMAC is to provide professional and technical consultation and policy advice to Department of Social Services (DSS), including MO HealthNet (MHD) and CD on the development and implementation of policy pertaining to the administration of psychotropic medications to children in foster care. The Agreement required the appointment of a chairperson, co-chair and 14 committee members with specific professional credentials. During this year, the PMAC received resignations from the representatives for the Department of Mental Health and the attorney for parents of children in foster care. The Children' Division has been attempting to locate, solicit, and assist in the appointment of new representatives.

The PMAC is required to meet at least quarterly and prepare an annual report outlining the PMAC's work and progress made by DSS towards implementing the goals established by PMAC, with the report to be presented to the Director of DSS by February 15, 2022 and published on DSS's website. This annual report will contain the PMAC's work for 2021.

Psychotropic Medications

The Agreement requires specific reviews for the prescription and administration of psychotropic medications.

Psychotropic medications refer to pharmaceutical drugs in the following drug classes:

- (1) Antipsychotics,
- (2) Antidepressants,
- (3) Lithium,
- (4) Stimulants,
- (5) Alpha agonists (e.g., clonidine or guanfacine),
- (6) Anxiolytics/hypnotics (e.g., benzodiazepines and nonbenzodiazepines), and
- (7) Anticonvulsants/mood stabilizers.

The specific reviews are the Secondary, Automatic, and Mandatory.

The Children's Division's Case Management Staff can send a referral to the Statewide Clinical Consultant for a Secondary review if they have concerns about psychotropic medications being prescribed to the child.

If the child's parents (if their parental rights are not terminated), legal guardian(s), the child's attorney/guardian ad litem, the resource provider, or the juvenile office have concerns about psychotropic medications being prescribed, they will contact the child's case manager and may request that the case manager make a referral to the Statewide Clinical Consultant.

The Automatic and Mandatory reviews are conducted when a child's prescription and/or the administration of a psychotropic medication(s) meets specific criteria.

Both reviews contain criteria to review the dosage of a prescribed medications to determine if the dose exceeds certain guidelines.

PMAC Clinical Subcommittee

The Agreement requires a review of any prescriptions for psychotropic medications that exceed certain guidelines. The development and implementation of these guidelines require advice from and consultation with medical and clinical experts. The PMAC has established a clinical subcommittee that developed the Excessive Dosage Guidelines in 2020. The guidelines contains the following tabs:

- Drug Listing: Lists trade name and Psychotropic Medications.
- Maximum Dose: Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval or PMAC recommendation
- Details: Lists information that was utilized to create the Excessive Dosage Guidelines.
- Literature Review: Two documents that contain the Pediatric Psychopharmacology Dose Recommendations.
- Definitions: Lists the meaning of words and abbreviations contained in the Excessive Dosage Guidelines and contains links to convert medication dosages that are prescribed and administered based on the weight of the child.

The Excessive Dosage Guidelines for 2020 were published on the DSS website. These guidelines will change from time to time based on advancements in medical science, the development of new medications, changing clinical practice, and other considerations. The clinical subcommittee is required to review the criteria on the Excessive Dosage Guidelines at least annually.

The Chair of the clinical subcommittee submitted a proposal to the PMAC to allow the pharmacists at the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) to perform a quarterly review of the Excessive Dosage Guidelines. The PMAC approved the schedule. The clinical subcommittee will update the PMAC on any changes.

The 2020 Excessive Dosage Guidelines was sent to the pharmacists at UMKC. The pharmacists reviewed the Guidelines and sent the updated information to the clinical subcommittee Chair. A new medication, which is FDA approved, was added and medications that were no longer prescribed in the United States were removed. The changes were approved by the clinical subcommittee and the Excessive Dosage Guidelines were revised. The clinical subcommittee Chair presented the revised Excessive Dosage Guidelines to the PMAC. The new Guidelines were approved by the PMAC and posted as the [2021 Excessive Dosage Guidelines](#) on the [DSS website](#) in August 2021.



Community Education

During several of the PMAC meetings, there were frequent discussions on the need to develop a training(s) to inform community members of the short and long term impact psychotropic medications can have on children in foster care. The PMAC set a specific goal to establish a subcommittee to work on creating and presenting these training(s).

The education and collaboration subcommittee was established in 2021. The members within the subcommittee are Individuals in the medical, legal, behavioral health, business management (CEO) and state agency (Children's Division) disciplines.

As part of the goal setting process for the subcommittee, the members reviewed several of the training requirements within the Agreement. The subcommittee adopted the goal to provide interactive webinars on psychotropic medications for community members involved in providing child welfare services to children.

PMAC Education and Collaboration Subcommittee

The PMAC subcommittee on education and collaboration ("Ed/Collab") met for the first time in March 2021. The purpose of this subcommittee is to engage, educate and collaborate with the Missouri child welfare community, including but not limited to medical providers, resource parents, Children's Division staff, attorneys and court personnel.

The PMAC Ed/Collab group is responsible for at least two interactive webinars for the child welfare community in Missouri. The group first reviewed the previous webinars and topics of interest including introduction to psychotropic medications, informed consent training, and engaging parents and youth. Additional topics for future webinars were also discussed, including alternatives to psychotropic medications, how to foster cross-sector collaboration, and guidance on the Agreement's procedural policies through a legal lens.



The first interactive webinar was held in August 2021, "A Day in the Life with a Trauma Lens". Pediatricians Dr. Maya Moody and Dr. Nathan Beucke presented on three cases centered around trauma and discussed how the situations or scenarios in the example cases provided may overlap or be misunderstood as other diagnoses, such as ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Substance Use Disorder, etc. The presentation was well attended and positive feedback was received.

The second interactive webinar was held in November 2021, "Managing Trauma Symptoms without Medications: Strategies for Caregivers." Dr. Maya Moody presented information to participants who had opportunities to discuss practical approaches to common presentations of trauma symptoms and come away with take home strategies in positive parenting, co-regulation, and developing safe, stable, nurturing relationships to promote resiliency and healing.

PMAC 2021 Highlights

In addition to the responsibilities of creating and maintaining the Excessive Dosage Guidelines and providing consultation, the PMAC discussed other topics such as a protocol to start emergency psychotropic medications to prevent the child from being admitted into the hospital, the designation of over-the-counter medications such as Benadryl and Melatonin as psychotropic medications, and the challenges Children's Division is facing with workforce vacancies and how to assist and support workers in this climate.

The PMAC members and the PMAC participants reviewed and researched these and other topics and developed/presented various trainings. The results of these reviews and updates on the trainings were presented during various PMAC meetings.

Summary

The Agreement requires the PMAC to prepare an annual report of their work and describe the progress the Department of Social Services has made towards implementing the goals generated from the PMAC's work.

The PMAC is required to maintain a clinical subcommittee of the PMAC to generally review the dosage guidelines. The clinical subcommittee continues to be an active subcommittee and the PMAC has approved a quarterly review process of the Excessive Dosage Guidelines. The 2021 Excessive Dosage Guidelines have been approved and posted.

In addition to the clinical subcommittee, the PMAC has created the education and collaboration subcommittee with a goal to develop and provide, at least twice per year an interactive webinar training on psychotropic medications to the child welfare community serving children in Missouri, including foster care staff, resource providers, court appointed special advocates, guardians ad litem, and attorneys for children and parents. The work involved and the progress of the education and collaboration subcommittee to implement and complete their goals has been described in this report.

Another PMAC responsibility within the Agreement is that PMAC provide professional/technical consultation and policy advice to the Department of Social Services, Children's Division and MOHealthNet. During this year, the PMAC has received updates from the Children's Division and MOHealthNet pertaining to topics such as; staff and training, medication monitoring, medical records, psychotropic medication review, informed consent/assent, data validation, and medical information pilot projects. There are several members of the PMAC who are assisting Children's Division with the development, implementation and monitoring of various topics through contractual and/or other informal arrangements.

It has been obvious throughout this year that Children's Division and the members of the PMAC are all passionate about reducing the use of psychotropic medicines in children in a healthy and impactful way. It is further obvious that Children's Division has been doing it's due diligence to fulfill the terms of the Settlement Agreement. But, subject to a few specifics, the role of the PMAC for the most part is advisory. For this reason this annual report needs to be viewed in conjunction with the reports and PMAC meeting minutes located on the Children's Division [Psychotropic Medication Settlement Reports](#) webpage. The PMAC meetings are where hard topics are broached and brainstorming and problem solving begin. The discussions during the meetings are not always comfortable; but, it is necessary. Foster children do not exist in a vacuum. There's resource limitations and trauma to be dealt with; there's issues surrounding scheduling, placement, personnel, differences of opinion, reports to be written and court to attend, just to name a few. Foster children who take psychotropic medication are no different and the PMAC shall endeavor to remember this.

If there are any questions for the PMAC please contact us at: PMAC@DSS.MO.GOV