

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Treatment Authorization Request (TAR) Restriction on Antipsychotic
Medications for the 0-17 Population**

Updated November 12, 2014

Prescriber FAQs

1. What information is needed for a pharmacy to submit a TAR?

Provide the pharmacist with at least the following information:

- ICD/DSM diagnosis code
- Recent discharge from hospital or juvenile justice center (if applicable)

Other brief details about the justification can also be included and will reduce the number of phone calls with the pharmacy. This information can be submitted in the comment sections of the e-Rx, on the hand written Rx, or provided orally when calling in the prescription.

2. The pharmacy is telling me that a TAR is needed for all antipsychotic medications prescribed outside of FDA approved indications for all age groups. Is this a new requirement? What information is needed on the TAR?

The TAR requirement implemented on October 1, 2014 did not impact medications prescribed outside of FDA approved indications (“off label”). The requirement for a TAR, prior to dispensing any medication for off label use, has always been in effect and remains unchanged. This requirement is not specific to antipsychotic medications but rather applies to all drugs regardless of therapeutic class.

In addition to the information necessary on all TARs for purposes of establishing medical necessity, the “off-label TAR” must include information documenting that the unlabeled use of the medication requested represents reasonable and current prescribing practices.

Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations section 51313 provides that the criteria for reasonable and current prescribing practices shall be based on:

(A) Reference to current medical literature.

(B) Consultation with provider organizations, academic and professional specialists.

- 3. As an inpatient psychiatrist, I am planning to prescribe an antipsychotic for a child to continue using after leaving the hospital. How can I ensure the child will receive the antipsychotic medication after discharge?**

Send the prescription to the outpatient pharmacy BEFORE the child leaves the hospital. This will allow time for the TAR to be processed. Make sure the pharmacy indicates on the TAR the ICD/DSM code and that the child is being released from the hospital.

- 4. When I start a new antipsychotic, I start with a low dose and adjust to patient response. Can I consolidate all dosages in one single TAR so I do not have to submit separate TARs for each dose?**

Yes, please include all anticipated doses on the TAR request plus any range in quantity for each strength tablet.

- 5. Who will be reviewing the TAR and making a decision on the approval?**

TAR requests will be reviewed by pharmacists working in Medi-Cal Field Offices. These pharmacists have been specially trained by board certified psychiatric pharmacists to review these antipsychotic TARs.

- 6. What medication monitoring information will be requested on a TAR?**

Providers will be asked on an annual basis to confirm that basic metabolic and movement disorder monitoring is being done. Specific Laboratory or rating scale results will not be requested.

- 7. Whom do I call if there is a delay or question on a TAR?**

The TAR field office can be called directly with questions or concerns.

Pharmacy TAR Office: (800) 572-9315

You can expedite the call by having the TAR number on hand. The TAR number can be obtained directly from the pharmacy.

Pharmacist FAQs

- 1. I need information regarding diagnosis and medical necessity from the prescribing doctor but am getting no response. What should I do?**

Fill a 72 hour emergency supply. Continue to contact the prescriber's office to collect the necessary information. Also, inform the parent or guardian of the child that you are waiting for more information from the prescriber before the full supply can be dispensed.

- 2. I filled a 72 hour emergency medication supply 3 days ago, and the TAR has yet to be submitted. The child is about to run out of medication, what should I do?**

Fill an additional 72 hour supply of medication, and submit a TAR as soon as possible. Notify the prescriber that you need some basic information before you can submit the TAR.

- 3. I received an antipsychotic prescription for a child recently discharged from the hospital. The prescriber included diagnosis information and indicated on the prescription “recent discharge from hospital”. If I am submitting a TAR, is “recent discharge from hospital” a reasonable explanation of medical necessity?**

Yes.

General Questions

- 1. Is there a phone number to call at DHCS to file a complaint about TAR processing?**

The Pharmacy TAR Section can be reached at (800) 572-9315. Ask to speak with a Supervisor.

- 2. Is it DHCS policy to deny antipsychotics for children?**

No. Maintaining patient continuity of care is of utmost concern to DHCS. Medications are not denied if they are medically necessary.

- 3. Are there any psychiatric based diagnosis codes that are considered “un-approvable”?**

Any diagnosis code reflecting a FDA approved indication for the drug is approvable. A diagnosis code reflecting “off-label” use of the drug will require additional medical justification for the use of the drug.

- 4. For how many months does DHCS approve TARs?**

Initial TARs for continuation of care will be approved for at least 6 months. This includes:

- An antipsychotic with a claims history prior to the TAR requirement, or
- An antipsychotic which was started in an acute care hospital, or
- An antipsychotic which was started in a juvenile justice center.

This approval window only applies to psychiatric diagnoses. Antipsychotic TAR requests for non-psychiatric indications will be reviewed on a case by case basis and further information may be requested.

The duration of TAR approvals for new starts will be based on medical necessity. The maximum approval period for a pharmacy TAR is 1 year.

5. Do we need to put the ICD/DSM code on a TAR, or just simple language of the diagnoses?

An ICD/DSM code is required for the primary diagnosis. Any other pertinent clinical information can be typed in the miscellaneous TAR information or medical justification section.

6. When changing the dose on medications up or down, does the TAR office discontinue the previous dose to avoid dispensing mistakes?

It is not the TAR offices' practice to discontinue TARs when a new TAR is approved. The dispensing pharmacy is responsible for ensuring that patients are receiving the current and correct dose.