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December 31, 2019

Michele Ovesey, Esq.
Acting Executive Director
NYC Board of Correction
1 Centre Street, Room 2213
New York, NY 10007

Dear Ms. Ovesey:

In accordance with the Board of Correction's Mental Health Minimum Standards for New York City Correctional Facilities, Section 2-09 (Variances), the Correctional Health Services division of the NYC Health + Hospitals requests a 6-month renewal of a continuing variance from Section 2-05 (b)(2)(i-ii) concerning psychotropic medication. The variance, first granted by the Board on November 10, 2005, authorizes psychiatrists to see and evaluate stable adult patients on psychotropic medication in general population at least every 28 days, rather than every 14 days. As the Board has acknowledged, this variance helps to improve patient care and make the psychotropic medication prescription practices consistent with the current community standard.

Attached is a summary of utilization data in support of the variance.

The consideration of the Board members and staff is greatly appreciated in this matter.

Sincerely,


A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "RM", is positioned above the typed name of the sender.

Ross MacDonald, MD
Correctional Health Services

c: Patsy Yang, DrPH

**New York City Health + Hospitals
Correctional Health Services**

Memo to: Michele Ovesey, Esq.
Acting Executive Director, BOC

From: Elizabeth Ford, M.D., Chief of Service—Psychiatry 

Date: December 31, 2019

Subject: Variance Report – Section 2-05(b)(2)(i-ii), Psychotropic Medication Utilization Data

This is a summary of the utilization data for the above-referenced variance.

Our pharmacy data system reports single-day snapshots of patients prescribed psychotropic medications. Recent data indicates that there are approximately 1970 patients with psychotropic medication orders. Of these patients, approximately 495 are housed in mental observation units, where, by policy, orders are for 14 days or less. There are approximately 830 patients on a 28-day prescription schedule in general population. That leaves approximately 645 general population (“GP”) inmates who are prescribed psychotropics on a 14-day schedule.

CHS by policy does not consider GP inmates stable until they have received a follow-up visit from a psychiatrist who has determined there is no need for a medication adjustment. Because of the short length of stay in jail, many patients are discharged before they receive a follow-up visit (14 days after the initial psychiatric assessment) to assess their stability under the CHS policy. Accordingly, many of these 645 GP inmates are receiving 14-day medication orders because they have yet to be seen in follow-up or they require closer psychiatric attention.

This is a clinically successful implementation of the Board’s variance that requires close follow-up when a GP patient is admitted to mental health services, and does not require redundant follow-up sessions for stable inmates with good responses to their medication. Since the variance has been in effect, there have been no known cases of stable patients becoming unstable and requiring hospitalization due to the 28-day regimen.

In light of the success of this effort, Correctional Health Services requests a renewal of this variance, which allows us to better direct our patient care resources to a more acute population.