DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy Number:	**500.203**
Title:	**Release Medications**
Effective Date:	**6/5/18**

PURPOSE: To ensure offenders who are released from a correctional facility are given a supply of medication to meet their health care needs until they find a practitioner in the community.

APPLICABILITY: All facility offenders. This policy does not apply to offenders transferring from the institution community work crew (ICWC) to work release.

DEFINITIONS: None

PROCEDURES:

A. General Requirements

1. Health services staff must ensure medications and prescriptions for on-going medical conditions are available to offenders on release.

2. Health services staff must not provide medications for external use or over-the-counter drugs.

3. An exception may be made for non-narcotic patches if so indicated by the practitioner. Schedule III – V medication may be provided at the discretion of the prescribing authority and with administrative approval.

B. Upon notification of an impending release, the nurse must:

1. Review the medical record for current medications that must be provided on release.

2. Check the quantity of medication that must be in the offender's possession on the date of release.
   a) Offenders may be issued current medication cards unless otherwise indicated by the practitioner.
   b) The nurse must order medications from the contracted pharmacy if the offender does not have an adequate supply.

3. Send only patient specific medications with the offender.

4. If indicated, have the offender sign the Waiver of Childproof Containers form (attached).

5. If prescriptions must go to a designated pharmacy for filling or at the offender's request, fax to that pharmacy the
   a) Physician's order to the designated pharmacy; and
   b) Patient release/transfer form (obtained from contract pharmacy).

6. Place the prescription and the medication(s) in an envelope labeled with the offender's name, offender identification number (OID), and date of release.

7. If the offender is diabetic, provide insulin, test strips, and a one-week supply of lancets and insulin syringes.

8. Notify the offender that the release medication(s)/prescription(s) have been ordered and are available for pickup at a specified location upon the offender's release from the facility.

9. Document in the medical record progress notes that the release medication(s) and written prescription(s) have been sent.

C. Non-Controlled Medications

1. Nursing staff must issue a minimum of a seven day supply or the offender's remaining supply, unless otherwise indicated by the practitioner.

2. Nursing staff must request the practitioner prescribe a 30 day supply to be filled in the community.

3. For offenders with a diagnosis of serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) – nursing staff must:
   b) Request the psychiatrist prescribe a 30 day supply of psychotropic medications (60 days if requested by the release and reintegration specialist).
   a) Issue a 30 day supply of psychotropic medication to the offender, if approved by the psychiatrist.

D. Schedule II Controlled Medication

1. Only a written prescription may be issued to the offender.

2. Medication may not be released – either from stock or patient specific.

3. A prescription may be written for up to a 30 day supply by the practitioner.

E. Schedule III-V Controlled Medication

1. A prescription may be written for up to a 30 day supply by the practitioner.

2. A seven day supply of medication may be issued only if specifically requested by practitioner and approved by the DOC medical director.

3. Medication may not be issued from facility stock.

F. If the offender leaves the facility without the release medication or prescription, usually only the prescription is mailed to the offender or to a designated pharmacy.

1. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to mail the medication to the offender.

2. This requires approval by the health services administrator/designee in consultation with the director of nursing.

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. Documentation of medications and prescriptions issued upon release is retained in the medical record progress notes.

ACA STANDARDS: None

REFERENCES: None

REPLACES: Division Directive 500.203, "Release Medications," 4/5/16.
All facility policies, memos, or other communications whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: Waiver of Childproof Containers form (500.203A)

APPROVALS:
Deputy Commissioner, Community Services
Deputy Commissioner, Facility Services
Assistant Commissioner, Facility Services
Assistant Commissioner, Operations Support