



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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To: Licensed Acute Treatment Services (ATS) Providers
From: Lydie Ultimo, Director, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services
Re: Patient Medication
Date: March 8, 2016

This memo is to clarify what BSAS-licensed acute treatment service (ATS) providers are permitted and expected to do with medications that patients bring with them while in the programs.

Background

Individuals who are admitted to a BSAS-licensed facility for acute treatment services may have other health issues, concurrent with a drug or alcohol use disorder, that require ongoing treatment. For example, an individual who is admitted for inpatient detoxification services may have a medical condition that requires continuation of a controlled substance or other medications while the individual is in the detoxification program. Several programs have expressed concern with Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) expectations for programs taking temporary custody of patients' medications while they are in treatment.

Clarification

BSAS addressed this issue with staff at the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). According to the DEA, acute treatment services programs may take custody of the medications that individuals bring with them, as long as the following conditions are met:

- Staff may take only custodial control of the medication;
- Staff must return medications to patients when they leave the program; and
- Staff must log the medication information (what drug, # of pills, etc.) at the beginning and end of the patient's stay at the facility, and every time the medication is dispensed in between.

For questions relating to this memo, please contact Erica Piedade, Director of Quality Assurance and Licensing at (413) 586-7525 x3182 or email Erica.piedade@state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lydie Ultimo".

Lydie Ultimo, MSW
Director, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services
Massachusetts Department of Public Health