



To: Bonnie Silva, Director of the Office of Community Living at HCPF  
From: Alliance  
Re: Colorado's Human Rights Committees  
cc: Colin Laughlin, Kara Johnson-Hufford, Barb Rydell, Rhyann Lubitz, Lauren Stanislao

January 9, 2019

Dear Bonnie Silva,

In 2018, Alliance's Board of Directors created a Human Rights Committee (HRC) Committee to research and discuss the current HRC laws, rules and practices, and discuss the future of the HRCs. This committee was comprised of Alliance members, non-member PASAs, and representatives from CCDC, The Arc of Colorado, Mental Health Colorado, and Disability Law. This committee was chaired by Sara Leeper from Jewish Family Service and staffed by Alliance.

This committee has an understanding to date on the following issues, and would like to work with Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) on implementing the following three recommendations:

**Recommendation # 1: HCPF should issue an operational memo to provide clarity to CCBs, PASAs, and HRCs on psychotropic medication reviews.**

- The existing HRC process would benefit from HCPF issuing policy direction delineating the role of HRCs specific to psychotropic medication reviews. In particular, it should provide clarity around HRC's role of reviewing the *process* of psych med review rather than review of the meds themselves.

**Recommendation # 2: HCPF should develop an HRC training manual, forms, and a streamlined state-wide oversight system for mandatory use across Colorado.**

- The existing HRC process would benefit from unified training, processes, expectations, and forms for HRCs, providers, parents, and people served.
- The HRC Committee recommends that HCPF form a focus group to help develop tools, forms and training. This group could include HCPF representatives, PASAs and CCBs. Some such tools such as standardized forms and training are already in place.

**Recommendation #3: HCPF should develop a process and protocols for PRN medications for sleep challenges and event specific anxiety.**

- This recommendation would require the Colorado Code of Regulations to be updated. Under 8.609.6 D., no. 8, it specifically states that psychotropic medications cannot be ordered as a PRN.
- Individuals in services would benefit from the use of PRN psychotropic medications in specific circumstances, related to individual's sleep challenges and event specific anxiety. Any use of PRN psychotropic medications must meet the specific residential licensing guidelines as well as being reviewed by the HRC.
  - Sleep challenges
    - In the case of sleep, the IDT must have a clear and thoughtful protocol with individual's identifiable actions that result in the need for a PRN sleep medication and the defined provider agency and staff support actions prior to

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- administering a PRN sleep medication. The protocol must be approved by the HRC.
- [Please review an example of a Sleep Challenges PRN Protocol](#)
- Event Triggered Anxiety
  - In the case of anxiety related to a specified triggering event, the provider agency must have detailed documented use of all alternative interventions and results that have been successful or unsuccessful in mitigating an individual's anxiety when triggered. The individual must have a DSM diagnosis (such as "Panic Disorder") from a certified Psychiatrist. The IDT must develop a protocol including the individual's identifiable actions that result in the need for a PRN anxiety medication and the defined provider agency and staff support actions prior to administering a PRN anxiety medication. The documented alternatives that have failed as well as the PRN protocol must be approved by the HRC.
  - [Please review an example of an Event Triggered Anxiety PRN Protocol](#)

The recommendations listed above would not alter the overall structure of Human Rights Committees. We look forward to discussing the recommendations with HCPF and working together to strengthen the rules and practices of the HRC process in Colorado.

Please contact Josh Rael [jrael@alliancecolorado.org](mailto:jrael@alliancecolorado.org) or Sara Leeper [sleeper@jewishfamilyservice.org](mailto:sleeper@jewishfamilyservice.org) for more information.

Sincerely,



Joshua J. Rael, J.D., M.P.A.  
Executive Director, Alliance