



**Section:** Medical Service Administration  
**Policy:** MSA 31  
**Subject:** Medical Services Protocols

**POLICY:** Each Delegate Agency utilizing midlevel clinicians must assure that they are functioning under protocols approved by the delegate agency's medical director. These protocols are written guidelines for the prevention or treatment of a health condition that gives direction for collection and assessment of data, a plan, client education, consultation and referral. The protocols do not define a standard of care, but are sufficiently detailed to provide concrete direction and guidance.

**GUIDELINES:**

1. Each midlevel clinician must function within approved protocols. Protocols developed by the State Protocols committee for Title X services will be used by all agencies. (The protocol committee consists of program medical director, midlevel clinicians and staff from the State Family Planning Office.) Protocols for services provided which are outside the scope of family planning must be developed through collaboration between the medical director and the midlevel clinicians of the delegate agency.
2. When an advanced practice nurse submits her/his scope of practice to the ND Board of Nursing, the Board of Nursing is approving only her/his nursing functions. Therefore, a physician (i.e., medical director) or precepting practitioner need not sign off on exams since this is a part of the midlevel clinician's scope of practice. An advanced practice nurse may choose to have the medical director sign off on a physical exam for purposes of documenting that the findings have been reviewed with the medical director.
3. If ND midlevel clinicians have prescriptive authority pending, the midlevel clinician is transcribing from the protocols/standing orders when she/he writes any medication orders in the chart. Therefore, the medical director must sign off on his/her standing orders within one week's time of the midlevel clinician's transcription.

If midlevel clinicians have prescriptive authority, it is not necessary for the medical director to sign off on the transcription of medication orders.

4. Any time a new medical director or midlevel clinician is hired, the protocols/standing orders must be jointly reviewed by both, approved by the medical director, and signed and dated by each party. This same process must also occur whenever a substitute midlevel clinician or medical director is being utilized (e.g., to cover vacations, leaves of absence, sick leave, etc.).
5. Protocols will be monitored no less than every three years by the protocol committee and updated as necessary, and signed by the medical director.
6. All clinic staff participating in the provisions of medical services must review the protocol manual annually.