



**STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
POLICY DIRECTIVE**

Policy No. DOC 4.5.19	Subject: NURSING ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS
Chapter 4: FACILITY/PROGRAM SERVICES	Page 1 of 2
Section 5: Health Care	Effective Date: Jan. 1, 1998
Signature: /s/ Mike Ferriter, Director	Revised: 06/09/11

I. POLICY

The Department of Corrections facility health care unit nursing protocols will guide offender health assessments, initiate treatment of identified conditions, and ensure appropriate referral to a physician, dentist, or mid-level practitioner for further evaluation and treatment.

II. APPLICABILITY

The Department-owned secure care facilities that include Riverside and Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facilities, Montana State Prison, Montana Women's Prison, and contracted facilities as specified in contract.

III. DEFINITIONS

Chief Facility Health Officer – The health authority or nursing supervisor responsible for the facility health care services.

Nursing Assessment Protocols – Written instructions outlining the steps for offender health status evaluation and intervention.

Standing Orders – Written orders that specify the same treatment and prescription drug course for each patient suspected of a given condition.

IV. DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVES

A. General Requirements

1. Facility health care units will establish nursing protocols that outline the steps for the assessment, treatment, and monitoring of specific offender health conditions.
2. The facility nursing administrator and physician will be responsible for the annual review and development of the nursing protocols.
3. Only a licensed clinician may initiate prescription medication treatment by a written or verbal order.
4. The chief facility health officer may allow the use of standing orders but only for preventative medications (e.g., immunizations), and for ailments that are typically treated with over-the-counter medications.
5. The facility nursing administrator will ensure that nurses are trained in protocol use and will document the following:
 - a. evidence that all new nursing staff is trained;

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- b. demonstration of knowledge and skills;
- c. evidence of annual review of skills; and
- d. evidence of retraining when new protocols are introduced or existing protocols are revised.

V. CLOSING

Questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Department medical director.

VI. REFERENCES

- A. [Title 37 Chapter 8, MCA](#)
- B. *P-E-11; National Commission on Correctional Health Care Standards, 2008*

VII. ATTACHMENTS

None.