



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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M E M O R A N D U M

**CLINICAL ADVISORY IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 FROM THE
MEDICAL DIRECTOR OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND FORENSIC PROGRAMS**

TO: CMH/PIHP Medical Directors
SHA Directors
BHDDA Bureau Director
BHDDA and SHA Senior Deputy Directors

FROM: Debra A. Pinals, MD, Medical Director, Behavioral Health and Forensic Programs, MDHHS

SUBJECT: Clozapine Guidance and ANC Testing

DATE: March 24, 2020

In light of the current COVID-19 situation, through discussions with several CMH/PIHP medical directors, other prescribers and state medical directors for behavioral health around the country, I am writing to remind you that for patients who are stable and prescribed clozapine, there should be serious consideration before changing medications, given the unique effectiveness of this medication and the risk of destabilization of a patient's psychiatric issues by changing medications. Any such change in medication, in my opinion, should be accompanied by documentation of a rationale and the usual issues related to informed consent. In addition, I am writing to remind you that prescribers and pharmacies have some discretion to order and dispense clozapine without an absolute neutrophil count reported within the specified timeframes. The following is posted on the Clozapine REMS website (<https://www.clozapinerems.com/CpmgClozapineUI/home.u#>):

*****Important Program Update (as of 01/23/2020)*****

“ANC Current Lab Requirements

Absolute Neutrophil Count not current (i.e., within 7, 15, or 31 days of the lab draw date) based on the patient's monitoring frequency (MF) will not prevent a patient from receiving clozapine from the pharmacy.

Although 'ANC not current' will not prevent a patient from receiving clozapine from the pharmacy, pharmacies are encouraged to submit the ANC to the Clozapine REMS Program when the pharmacist is made aware of a more current ANC than the most recent lab value reported in the PDA response....” (Please go to the REMS website for further information)

If you have clozapine-related questions or want further free education on clozapine, you may wish to consult with <https://smiadviser.org/>, a national resource administered through the American Psychiatric Association, working with partners such as the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, with an entire section devoted to clozapine education. As a public service, the site also has the capability for clinical consultation at no cost.