Policy Title: Safe Discontinuation and Tapering Protocol with Client Communication

Effective Date: 08/15/2025

Approved By: Director of Medical and Clinical Services

Review Schedule: Annually or as Needed

Applies To: All Programs — Outpatient MH/SUD, IOP, PHP, and Integrated Primary Care/Behavioral Health

I. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures for the safe discontinuation or tapering of medications, ensuring clinical safety, regulatory compliance, and effective communication with the client and care team.

II. Scope

Applies to all REACH for Tomorrow prescribers and clinical staff responsible for medication management across all programs.

III. Policy Statement

Medication tapering or discontinuation must be individualized and directed by a licensed prescriber, with documentation, client education, and follow-up monitoring to minimize withdrawal or relapse risks.

IV. Procedures

A. Pre-Taper Assessment

The prescriber reviews medication indication, duration, risks, and client stability. Withdrawal potential and comorbidities are assessed, and rationale for discontinuation is documented in the EHR.

B. Development of Taper Plan

A written taper schedule is developed based on evidence-based guidelines, medication half-life, and client needs. Each step of the taper includes dosage, interval, and criteria for

pause or adjustment.

C. Client Communication and Consent

The prescriber discusses the taper plan, expected outcomes, risks, and withdrawal symptoms. Written and verbal instructions are provided, and client understanding and consent are documented in the EHR.

D. Monitoring During Taper

Follow-up visits are scheduled to assess withdrawal symptoms, relapse risk, and medication adherence. Adjustments are made as clinically indicated, and PDMP checks and labs are completed when required.

E. Coordination and Documentation

All taper plans and progress are documented in the EHR. Coordination with behavioral and primary care providers is completed and documented. Upon completion, a Medication Transition Summary is entered.

F. Oversight and Quality Assurance

The Director of Medical and Clinical Services ensures adherence to tapering procedures through supervision and quarterly review by the Medication Management Committee.