



PSYCHIATRIC TECHNICIAN I/II

DEFINITION

Under general supervision or direction, provides medication management support to clients; collaborates with other medical staff and interdisciplinary health treatment teams to implement treatment plans, and reports on impact of medications; serves as an initial point of contact for clients discharged from psychiatric facilities to orient them to County behavioral health services; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision or direction from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Psychiatric Technician I: This is the entry-level classification in the Psychiatric Technician class series. Initially under general supervision from medical staff, incumbents learn and perform routine medication management duties for clients. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied, complex, and difficult; close supervision and frequent review of work lessen as an incumbent demonstrates skill to perform the work independently. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the II-level, but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise.

Psychiatric Technician II: This is the fully qualified journey-level classification in the Psychiatric Technician class series. Positions at this level are distinguished from the I-level by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working independently under less supervision than the I-level, and exercising judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit.

This class is distinguished from professional clinical or medical classifications in that the latter have responsibility for client physical and behavioral health care assessments and treatment.

Positions in the Psychiatric Technician class series are flexibly staffed, and positions at the II-level are normally filled by advancement from the I-level after gaining the knowledge, skill, and experience which meet the qualifications for, and after demonstrating the ability to, perform the work of the higher-level class.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Under the direction of clinical staff, provides medication management services to behavioral health clients; ensures the proper acquisition and self-administration of medication; may travel to outpatient clinics, residences, transitional housing, inmate facilities, or other locations to work with clients.
- Serves as an initial point of contact for clients who have been discharged from a psychiatric health facility; orients clients to the County's behavioral health services; verifies client information, including medical history and medication needs; responds to client questions and concerns.

- Collaborates with clinical staff to process new prescriptions and refills; works with insurance companies to obtain approvals; writes medical justifications to have prescriptions approved, as necessary; works with clinical staff and insurance companies to determine options when prescriptions are denied.
- Collects, organizes, and delivers medications to clients; provides education and training to clients, their families, and/or staff on the proper care and use of medications, including symptoms of, reactions to, or side effects of, specific medications; informs clients of the impact of abuse and/or misuse of medications.
- Conducts medication checks on clients to assess their overall medication management capabilities; takes appropriate action if a client poses danger with respect to the use or abuse of medication; arranges/facilitates laboratory monitoring as outlined in the client plan of care standing or client specific order to assess dosage efficacy including under or overdose conditions; takes and records client vital signs as appropriate.
- Serves as a member of an inter-professional team or intensive care management team; reports on prescribed medication changes, self-administration concerns, observed or reported side effects, and other psychosocial parameters that improve or impede the client's ability to maintain stability and compliance with treatment goals.
- As needed, performs crisis intervention for walk-in clients or non-clients; evaluates individuals to identify level of stable behavior; provides support and assistance in problem resolution; coordinates or arranges for the provision of appropriate care services.
- Serves as an advocate for clients with internal and external medical professionals; accompanies clients to medical and clinician appointments and provides support/information as needed and appropriate.
- Collaborates with clinicians and medical professionals from the Alcohol and Drug Program to facilitate and monitor medication compliance as appropriate; reports on prescribed medication changes, compliance to treatment agreements or associated deviations; participates in intervention/care planning to facilitate client progress toward goal completion.
- Maintains accurate records and files; documents client progress and procedures performed.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Some knowledge and abilities may be gained by employees at the entry (I) level while in a learning capacity.

Knowledge of:

- Operations, services, and activities of a comprehensive behavioral health program with respect to the intervention and treatment of clients.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned areas of responsibility, including confidentiality laws and the permitted use of medical records.
- Principles and practices of case management for behavioral health clients, including client charting and process documentation.
- Pharmacological understanding of the proper use and effectiveness of medications, including contraindications, side effects, and probability of addiction or dependency.
- Methods and techniques of observing clients for negative reactions to medications, or addictive/dependency outcomes, and courses of action to treat same.
- Medical and psychiatric terminology.
- Methods and techniques of performing crisis intervention assessments, and identification of options for mitigation/management.
- Insurance and pharmacy processes for ordering and procuring needed medications for clients.
- Methods and techniques of conducting client interviews and eliciting needed information.
- Evolving trends and strategies in medication management.
- Methods and techniques of conducting research.

- Principles and practices of complex documentation preparation and recordkeeping.
- Community socioeconomic and cultural demographics.
- Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and County staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

Ability to

- Provide medication management services to a diverse range of clients with behavioral health disorders.
- Administer medications and observe, record, and report their effects.
- Effectively contribute to assigned team discussions on client treatment and progress.
- Work collaboratively with medical professionals, pharmacies, and insurance companies to obtain needed client medications.
- Observe client behavior to determine whether intervention is needed, or to identify negative reactions to medications.
- Respond to crisis intervention situations and client emergencies in a calm and effective manner.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Prepare clear and concise client progress reports and other written material.
- Document and maintain complex client records and files, including client medical histories.
- Effectively represent the department and the County in meetings with governmental agencies; community groups; various business, professional, and regulatory organizations; and in meetings with individuals.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

A combination of the required experience, education, and training that would provide the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying; however, education may not solely substitute for the required experience.

Psychiatric Technician I:

Equivalent to a level of education and course of study, which would qualify as an accredited program for qualifying for California State License as a Psychiatric Technician or a Licensed Vocational Nurse;

AND

One (1) year of experience performing professional-level medication management duties.

Psychiatric Technician II:

Equivalent to a level of education and course of study, which would qualify as an accredited program for incumbents to obtain Psychiatric Technician or a licensed Vocational Nurse;

AND

Two (2) years of medication program support for behavioral health clients at a level equivalent to the County's class of Psychiatric Technician I.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain and maintain, a valid California or Nevada Driver's License and a satisfactory driving record.
- Possession of license as a Psychiatric Technician or Licensed Vocational Nurse in the State of California.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in out-patient clinics, correctional facilities, and standard office settings; use standard office and medical care equipment, including but not limited to computer technology, electronic communication, hypodermics, stethoscope, blood pressure measuring devices, and to operate a motor vehicle to for travel to service sites; vision to observe client behavior, physical compromise or manifestations of illness read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing to conduct interviews and auscultatory assessment; speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. Standing and walking between work areas of a facility or in the community is frequently required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using keyboard devices operate standard office equipment and to carry out medically oriented screening, specimen collection and intervention. Positions in this classification frequently bend, stoop, kneel, and reach to perform assigned duties, as well as push and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in an office, out-patient clinical, and correctional facility environments with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, with potential exposure to biopharmaceutical substances, bloodborne pathogens, aerosolized communicable disease and hazardous chemicals. Positions require vaccination for communicable disease as stipulated in Cal-OSHA regulations. Employees may be subject to violence in the workplace related to interaction with clients afflicted with behavioral disorders, and under emotional duress including those which require emergency crisis intervention. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Must be willing to work after hours, weekends, and holidays as needed.