

# CAROLINA FAMILY HEALTH CENTERS, INC.

## PROCEDURE

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**TITLE:** PHR-300.18 Automatic Substitution

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**EFFECTIVE DATE:** December 2004

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**SECTION:** Pharmacy

**REFERENCE POLICY:** PHR-300 Medication Distribution

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**RESPONSIBLE CHIEF OF STAFF:** Chief Pharmacy Officer

**RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE:** Pharmacy & Therapeutics CIT

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**REVIEWED:** 01/2008, 01/2015, 01/2017, 01/28/2025

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### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the purpose and procedure for automatic therapeutic drug substitution at Carolina Family Health Centers, Inc. (CFHC, Inc.). The need for automatic substitution may arise when the patient does not qualify for a bulk program or when a prescriber writes for a non-formulary medication. This procedure is not intended to outline or define generic substitution; the generic substitution procedure is covered in *PHR-300.04 Product Selection*.

### II. PROCEDURE

The need for pharmacist-initiated automatic therapeutic drug substitution may arise in a variety of circumstances including: product removal from the market, patient ineligibility for a bulk or medication assistance program, or when a prescriber writes for a non-formulary product.

The pharmacy along with the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Continuous Improvement Team (P&T CIT) recommends such substitutions based on the availability of drug products and other factors. The P&T CIT formulates protocols for drug substitutions based on available literature and knowledge of clinical practice. Once the protocol has been formulated, this committee formally recommends the substitution to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). The CMO is the final approver for automatic therapeutic substitutions at CFHC, Inc.

When an automatic therapeutic drug substitution is approved by the CMO, all prescribers receive a copy of the automatic substitution protocol in the Medication Formulary or as a memorandum/email notification.

When the pharmacy receives a prescription for a medication that qualifies for automatic therapeutic drug substitution, the pharmacist shall annotate on the original electronic prescription image "Automatic Substitution," and the medication, dose, and directions that will be substituted. The medication is filled in a normal fashion and the patient is counseled on the switch of medication.

The prescriber is notified of the substitution through an encounter in the patient's electronic health record (EHR). The encounter note template includes information regarding both the

original prescription and information regarding the substituted medication. This encounter is then routed to the prescriber. The pharmacist also updates the patient's medication list as appropriate.

Prescribers have the authority to disallow automatic therapeutic drug substitution of a product by marking the prescription "Dispense as Written." Additionally, prescribers may reject an automatic therapeutic substitution. They must document this in the EHR encounter and send a new prescription to the pharmacy for the alternative drug approved. If the pharmacy does not have the alternative medication in stock, it will be ordered for the next business day, and the patient will be responsible for the cost in accordance with usual and customary charges. If the medication is no longer available on the market, the pharmacist will work with the provider to find a substitution the provider approves.

### **III. DEFINITION**

- **Automatic therapeutic drug substitution:** the pharmacist-initiated substitution of one medication for a therapeutically equivalent [but different] medication without prior prescriber approval.