

## **Cuyahoga County Jail's Medication Policy Briefing:**

- The Cuyahoga County jail has adopted new guidelines regarding inmates taking Xanax or other anti-anxiety drugs known as benzodiazepines.
- Inmates will be given those drugs once their prescriptions are verified and will be scheduled to see a psychiatrist within two weeks.
- If the prescription can't be verified, the inmate will see a psychiatrist that day or the next (within 24 hours) so that doctor can determine if the inmate should continue receiving the medication, or prescribed another benzodiazepines.
- The jail's medical guidelines call for the use of Xanax to be tapered off over seven to 14 days and the inmate switched to Buspar, Vistaril or an antidepressant.

## **HB 84: Sean's Law Briefing:**

- HB 84 will require health-trained personnel that work in jails to perform a medical, dental, and mental health screening on each inmate upon arrival at a jail, including usage of alcohol and drugs.
- Requires the sheriff to provide training on the symptoms, consequences and treatment options of withdrawal from Xanax, Ativan, Valium and other benzodiazepines, and alcohol and other addictive drugs to all health-trained personnel conducting the screening.
- Requires physician servicing the jail to ensure that adequate measures are in place to identify and treat inmates at risk of withdrawal from addictive drugs.
- If an inmate is taking a benzodiazepine, personnel must attempt to verify the prescription with the prescribing physician within 24 hours of the inmate being admitted to the jail.
- If unable to verify the prescription within 24 hours, personnel must arrange for the inmate to meet with a psychiatrist within 72 hours of being admitted to the jail to ensure, if necessary, the tapering off of the benzodiazepine in a timely and clinically appropriate manner using appropriate, less addictive medication.
- We strongly recommend that this legislation be passed to avoid any further suffering or death by inmates relying on prescription benzodiazepines, and would like this committee to recommend that the full board pass a resolution.