



## Network Notification

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**Date: November 2015**

**To: Kentucky physicians**

**From: Humana – CareSource®**

**Subject: Provider Guidelines for Antipsychotic, Antidepressant Prescriptions**

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Increasingly, antipsychotic drugs are prescribed to children and adolescents diagnosed with a variety of mental health conditions. While there are indications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for some mental health conditions in pediatric populations, prescriptions often are written for off-label indications.

To avoid negative outcomes for children and adolescents, please keep in mind the following guidelines when prescribing psychotropic medications:

1. Potential appropriate uses of antipsychotic drugs include:
  - Aggression or severe disruptive behavior with significant risk of harm to others or oneself
  - Aggression and/or self-injury associated with autistic/intellectual disability
  - Severe refractory tics
  - Psychosis
2. Discouraged uses include:
  - Chronic mood dysregulation
  - Sleep aid
  - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  - Anxiety
3. The risks of prescribing antipsychotic drugs for pediatric patients include:
  - Extrapyramidal symptoms
  - Metabolic changes (i.e., increased risk of diabetes)
  - Seizure
  - Suicidality
  - Sedation
  - Tachycardia
  - Orthostatic hypotension
  - Blurred vision

Given that psychotropic medications' long-term effects are not yet understood, please use caution when prescribing multiple psychotropic medications to children and adolescents. There are sometimes specific circumstances when an optimal medication regimen might use multiple psychotropic medications to treat a condition. Please weigh the potential benefits against the

risks of untreated illness when prescribing more than one psychotropic medication.

- Tips for avoiding polypharmacy:
  - Consider less risky psychosocial treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy, stress management, interpersonal psychotherapy, etc.
  - Refrain from prescribing more than one psychotropic medication in the same class, as there is little to no evidence that it is beneficial in children and adolescents, and it increases the risk of side effects and drug interactions.
  - Utilize tapering process to discontinue unnecessary medications.
  - Prescribe medications relevant to the diagnosis and target symptoms.
    - Prioritize target symptoms. For example, treat psychosis and mood disorders before considering pharmacological intervention for other symptoms, such as inattention.

If you have further questions regarding polypharmacy or psychotropic medication for children and adolescents, please contact the pharmacy department by calling 1-855-852-7005 and following the prompts. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time.