



MaineCare Services
*An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services*

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To: MaineCare Providers
From: Jennifer Palow, Pharmacy Unit Manager
Date: June 17, 2010
Re: Atypical Antipsychotics Prior Authorization Process

On May 6th, MaineCare announced a Prior Authorization process for Atypical Antipsychotics that will go into effect on July 1, 2010. Off label use of these drugs has made them the most costly drugs to MaineCare. Therefore, to prevent continued off label use, we have recently been asking to review medical records. Off label use includes:

- insomnia
- dementia related psychosis
- attention deficit disorder
- anxiety disorders

Not only are these drugs expensive, but they have serious side effects. Side effects are weight gain, diabetes, lipid abnormalities, and potentially irreversible movement disorders such as tardive dyskinesia. The Prior Authorization will require that these drugs be used in accordance with FDA approval or literature-supported evidence-based best practices. These drugs are appropriately used to treat:

- schizophrenia
- bipolar disorder
- agitation related to autism
- severe behavioral dyscontrol with risk of imminent need for emergency services such as the emergency room, crisis services, or an inpatient psychiatric facility

Atypical antipsychotics are also used along with antidepressants to treat major depression. This use will be permitted if the patient has previously tried antidepressants from two distinct classes (SSRIs, SNRIs, TCAs, bupropion).

The following prescribers will be excluded from the PA process: Psychiatrists, Nurse Practitioners, PAs who work with a psychiatrist, and Behavioral Pediatricians. No provider is exempt from the Prior Authorization for children under the age of 5. The goal of this new process is to ensure appropriate use of these medications, reduce costs for inappropriate use, and improve patient care.

If you have questions you may contact Goold Health Systems at 1-888-445-0497 or Jennifer Palow, Pharmacy Division Manager at jennifer.palow@maine.gov.