



Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
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Office of Systems, Operations & Pharmacy
Medical Care Programs

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Maryland Medical Assistance Program
Pharmacy Transmittal No. 196
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TO: Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Local Health Departments, Outpatient Mental Health Clinics, General Clinics, Psychiatrists, Nurse Psychotherapists, Healthy Kids Providers, and Pharmacies

FROM: Charles E. Lehman, Executive Director *Charles E. Lehman*
Office of Systems, Operations & Pharmacy

NOTE: Please ensure that appropriate staff members in your organizations are informed of the contents of this transmittal.

RE: **Peer Review Program for Mental Health Medications in Children and Adolescents**

The use of antipsychotic agents in children and adolescents has increased substantially over the past decade. There is increased public scrutiny, controversy, and debate regarding the increasing use of the antipsychotic agents in children and the lack of data on long-term effects. The long-term efficacy and safety of these agents in the pediatric population has not been well established for any given clinical indication.

For these reasons, the State of Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program (MMPP) is launching a new program – The Peer Review Program for Mental Health Drugs. The program will start in October 2011 and will initially address the use of antipsychotics in Medicaid patients under five years of age. In partnership with the Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA) and the University of Maryland (UMD) Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and School of Pharmacy, the program's goal is to ensure that members of this vulnerable population receive optimal treatment in concert with appropriate non-pharmacologic measures in the safest manner possible.

The MMPP, MHA and UMD collected data regarding patients receiving these agents, developed criteria for the use of antipsychotics in children under the age of five, and will institute a pre-authorization process for the use of these medications and ensure that patients are monitored appropriately. Child psychiatrists and clinical pharmacists will perform the reviews and pre-authorizations. The attached handout provides an overview of the program.



The MMPP and MHA will sponsor a Webinar to discuss The Peer Review Program and answer questions regarding this program on Thursday, September 15th from 8:30-10:00AM. Please go to the MMPP website <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/mma/mpap/peerreview.htm> for more details on how to join the Webinar. If you are unable to attend, you can access a recording of the Webinar via the website above. Additional information about the pre- authorization process, including the required pre-authorization form and clinical criteria, is also available on this site.

Questions concerning this transmittal should be directed to the Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program, 410-767-1455.