



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

**Maryland Medical Assistance Program**  
**Pharmacy Transmittal No. 197**  
**June 20, 2012**

**TO:** Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Local Health Departments, Outpatient Mental Health Clinics, General Clinics, Psychiatrists, Nurse Psychotherapists, Healthy Kids Providers, and Pharmacies

**FROM:** Athos Alexandrou, Director, Pharmacy Services  
*Athos Alexandrou*  
Susan Tucker, Executive Director, Office of Health Services  
*Susan J. Tucker*

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

**RE:** Expansion of the Peer Review Pre-Authorization Program of Antipsychotic Medications for Youth Less Than 10 Years Old

The use of antipsychotic agents in children and adolescents has increased substantially over the past decade. At the same time, there is increased public scrutiny, controversy, and debate regarding the increasing use of the antipsychotic agents in children because the long-term efficacy and safety of these agents in the pediatric population has not been well established. Starting July 2012, the Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program (MMPP) will expand the Peer Review Program for Mental Health Drugs, and require prior authorization for antipsychotic medication for children under 10 years old.

In October of 2011, the State of Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program (MMPP) launched a new program – The Peer Review Program for Mental Health Drugs. The program initially addressed the use of antipsychotics in Medicaid patients under five years of age. In July 2012, the MMPP will expand the Program to Medicaid patients less than ten 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.

To date, the MMPP, MHA and UMD have:

- Collected data regarding patients receiving these agents
- Developed criteria for the use of antipsychotics in children under the age of ten using expertise gained from the peer reviews for children under five

- Hired child psychiatrists and clinical pharmacists to perform the reviews and pre-authorizations and to ensure that patients are monitored appropriately
- Planned the expansion of the pre-authorization process for the use of these medications to children under ten.

The MMPP, MHA and UMD will post a recorded Webinar in July, regarding the Peer Review Program on the MMPP website:

<http://mmcp.dhmh.maryland.gov/pap/SitePages/Peer%20Review%20Program.aspx>. 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 at (410) 767-1455.