

**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. 198****June 17, 2013**

- TO:** Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Local Health Departments, Outpatient Mental Health Clinics, General Clinics, Psychiatrists, Nurse Psychotherapists, Healthy Kids Providers, and Pharmacies
- FROM:** Susan Tucker, Executive Director, Office of Health Services
Keith Sewell, Executive Director, Office of Systems, Operations and Pharmacy
- 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 18 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.

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 expanded the Program to Medicaid patients less than ten years of age. Starting in July 2013 and through December 2013, the MMPP will gradually expand the Peer Review Program for Mental Health Drugs, and require prior authorization (PA) for antipsychotic medication for children under 18 years old. The expansion schedule is as follows:

Patient Age (Years)	Time Period for Prescriber to Contact Peer Review Program	Date Prescription will Start Denying at the Pharmacy
10	Early July to Early September	September 16, 2013
11	Early August to Mid October	October 22, 2013
12 to 13	Early September to Mid November	November 19, 2013
14 to 15	Late September to Early December	December 16, 2013

16 to 17	Mid October to Early January	January 17, 2014
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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 18 using expertise gained from the peer reviews for children under ten
- 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 18.

Information regarding the Peer Review Program, including the required pre-authorization form and clinical criteria, is available on the MMPP website:

<http://mmcp.dhmh.maryland.gov/pap/SitePages/Peer%20Review%20Program.aspx>.

Questions concerning this transmittal should be directed to the Maryland Medicaid Pharmacy Program at 1-800-492-5231, option 3.