



Network Notification

Date: August 10, 2016
To: Kentucky Medicaid health care providers
From: Humana – CareSource®
Subject: Antipsychotic Medication Prescriptions

Antipsychotic medications are expensive, pose the highest risk to patients and are the fastest growing therapeutic medication class for children with mental disorders. Given the risks, expense and side effects associated with antipsychotic medications, it is important to screen patients prior to initiating medication treatment and periodically monitor for side effects and response to treatment.

Antipsychotics have the potential for serious side effects, including weight gain, metabolic disturbances, slowed growth and movement disorders, including tardive dyskinesia.

The American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry recommends the following for patients receiving antipsychotic medications:

- Screen at the start of medication treatment and conduct ongoing monitoring
- Schedule regular follow-up visits to monitor for target symptom reduction, metabolic problems and development of abnormal movements
- Consider monitoring liver function and administering an electrocardiogram (EKG) if a patient presents side effects after starting an antipsychotic drug regimen

Physicians are also encouraged to keep the following points in mind when treating these patients:

- Increased weight tends to occur early. Ongoing monitoring for metabolic problems includes fasting serum glucose and LDL cholesterol every six months. Height, weight, waist circumference, BMI, pulse and blood pressure should be taken at each visit. If a patient has a BMI over the 85th percentile, nutrition and physical activity intervention may be needed. A switch to a medication less likely to cause weight gain also should be considered.
- The Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale (AIMS) tool to monitor for involuntary movements is available in the public domain. A baseline AIMS should be performed prior to drug regimen initiation, then monitored periodically if there are abnormal movement symptoms. If there are no movement symptoms, a screening up to six months after the medication is discontinued or annually is helpful.