

Best Practices for Closing APM/SSD Gaps in Care

Talk to your patient and/or their caregiver(s) about the risks and benefits of antipsychotic medications. Individuals should be fully informed of the risks and benefits of antipsychotic medications before they or their child starts taking them. They should be made aware of both the cardiac and the metabolic changes, including the risk of obesity, that can occur with chronic use. The member and/or their guardian should also be aware of the importance of obtaining labs after starting the medication to monitor these concerns closely.

Consider the individual's risk factors for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. These risk factors may include but are not limited to family history, obesity, early onset of cardiac disease in a parent, and other medical conditions.

Monitor your patient's progress closely if you do prescribe an antipsychotic. This includes monitoring for side effects, such as weight gain, increased glucose levels, and high cholesterol. If the labs become abnormal, consider either lowering the dose, choosing a first generation medication such as haloperidol, or trying an alternate second generation medication.

Follow the recommendations published by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) and the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) for metabolic monitoring. Children and adolescents should receive bloodwork for baseline and then continuous monitoring in intervals stated by AACAP after starting a medication or after any change in dosages.

Choose the right medication. Consider other medications first for concerns like behavioral issues, such as alpha agonists (clonidine, guanfacine) prior to starting an antipsychotic, as that is more likely to cause significant side effects such as weight gain and other metabolic problems.

Arrange for lab tests to be done in the office. If this is not possible, schedule the patient's lab testing with the patient (and parent/guardian, if applicable) during the appointment.

Encourage healthy lifestyle habits. Individuals who are taking antipsychotic medications should be encouraged to eat a healthy diet, get regular exercise, and maintain a healthy weight and be made aware of paying attention to any metabolic changes occurring while taking the medication, such as weight gain.

Communicate with the Member's primary care team. Implement a communication plan that includes monitoring blood glucose and cholesterol levels and steps to take if levels become abnormal. Collaboration between primary and behavioral health care is important for optimizing Members' treatment plans and achieving optimal health outcomes.

By following these best practices, providers can help to ensure that all MVP Members who are taking antipsychotic medications are provided high quality care during their treatment. For more information visit mvphealthcare.com/providers and select *Resources*, then *Reference Library Home*, and then *HEDIS Provider Reference Guides*.