



Pennsylvania Behavioral Health and Aging Coalition
Opening Doors for Older Pennsylvanians

News You Can Use...

July 2011

FDA Safety Alert: Risperdal and Risperidone: Recall – Uncharacteristic Odor

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a safety alert regarding Risperdal and Risperidone. Janssen Pharmaceuticals issued a recall of Risperdal (risperidone) lot 0GG904 3mg tablets and risperidone lot OIGI752mg tablets. The recall stems from an uncharacteristic odor thought to be caused by trace amounts of TBA (2,4,6 tribromoanisole), a non-toxic byproduct of a chemical preservative sometimes applied to wood often used in the construction of pallets used for transporting and storing materials. A small number of consumers have reported temporary gastrointestinal symptoms.

<http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/SafetyInformation/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm259901.htm>

Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline

The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline provides information and support to people with memory loss, caregivers, health care professionals and the general public. Call toll-free anytime day or night at **1-800-272-3900, TDD 1-866-403-3073**. The Helpline can also give referrals to local community programs, services and ongoing support.

http://www.alz.org/we_can_help_24_7_helpline.asp

The State of Psychiatric–Mental Health Nursing

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has called for the transformation of mental health care in America from an illness-centered paradigm to recovery-oriented systems of care. As part of this initiative, the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) launched a 5-year project to develop and implement a training curriculum that promotes greater awareness, acceptance, and adoption of mental health recovery principles and practices among psychiatric–mental health care nurses. More information is available at:

<http://www.dsgonline.com/RTP/2011.weekly/2011.07.07/WH.2011.07.07.html>



Medicare Proposes Coverage for Screening and Counseling for Alcohol Misuse and Screening for Depression

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today proposed to add alcohol screening and behavioral counseling, and screening for depression, to the comprehensive package of preventive services now covered by Medicare. These proposed national coverage determinations (NCDs) are issued under authority granted by the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (MIPPA), which allows CMS to add coverage of new preventive benefits that are recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and are appropriate for Medicare beneficiaries.

Under the new proposals, Medicare would cover an annual alcohol misuse screening by a beneficiary's primary care provider. The benefit would also include four behavioral counseling sessions per year if a beneficiary screens positive for alcohol misuse. Medicare would also cover an annual screening for depression in primary care settings that offer staff-assisted depression care, so beneficiaries can receive an accurate diagnosis, effective treatment, and follow-up.

Public comments are invited on the proposed decisions for 30 days. CMS will issue final coverage decisions later this year. The proposal for screening and counseling for alcohol misuse is available on the CMS website at:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-proposed-decision-memo.aspx?&NcaName=Screening%20and%20Behavioral%20Counseling%20Interventions%20in%20Primary%20Care%20to%20Reduce%20Alcohol%20Misuse&bc=ACAAAAAIAAAA&NCAId=249&>

The proposal for screening and counseling for depression is available on the CMS website at:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-proposed-decision-memo.aspx?&NcaName=Screening%20for%20Depression%20in%20Adults&bc=ACAAAAAIAAAA&NCAId=251&>

Trends in Treating Depression Favor Psychotropic Medications Over Psychotherapy

The way depression is treated in the United States has changed over the past 20 years. Between 1987 and 1997, significantly more people were treated for depression on an outpatient basis. During this time, the use of psychotherapy declined, replaced by antidepressant medications. In 1987, 37.3 percent of outpatients treated for depression received antidepressant medications. By 1997, it had doubled to 74.5 percent. Two recent studies looked at the next decade from 1998 to 2007 to see if these trends in treating depression continued. Results revealed a continued decline in the use of psychotherapy and stabilization in the use of antidepressants to treat depression. Both studies were supported by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

<http://www.ahrq.gov/research/jul11/0711RA22.htm>



Care Crossroads: An Interactive Caregiver Community Website

Alzheimer's caregivers have special challenges, interests, and needs. Among them is connecting with others in similar straits to get the latest information from experts and those in the trenches. That's why the Alzheimer's Foundation of America recently launched Care Crossroads (www.carecrossroads.org), an interactive caregiver community Web site. Besides videos and resources, it lets users connect with social workers and other experts via Skype and live chat, or brainstorm and commiserate with fellow caregivers via discussion boards and online support groups.

www.carecrossroads.org

Depression Tool

Houston-based Care for Elders and Baylor College of Medicine are using the *Innovation Readiness Assessment* to help disseminate Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors), an evidence-based case management program that helps older adults increase their awareness of and manage their depression.

Information about Healthy IDEAS is available at

<http://www.careforelders.org/default.aspx/MenuItemID/492/MenuGroup/healthyideas.htm> or go to

http://www.questionpro.com/akira/TakeSurvey?id=1674868&custom1=QPRO_Survey_c&custom2=a0P500000003vvi to use an online tool to see if your organization is ready to implement Healthy IDEAS.

Statewide Forums Slated to Seek Input on Health Insurance Exchanges

The Pennsylvania Insurance Department will hold three forums during August to gather public input on health insurance exchanges, Insurance Commissioner Health insurance exchanges are a one-stop shopping resource for those who are looking to buy health insurance. They offer consumers and businesses a variety of choices when they are in the market for a health insurance plan.

Under federal health care reform, states can develop their own exchanges, or default to the federal government. The Insurance Department is currently exploring options for our health care consumers, payers and other stakeholders."

The department is actively seeking input from all parties impacted by the formation of health insurance exchanges. The forums will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day, with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m., as follows:

- **Tuesday, Aug. 9:** Doubletree Hotel Pittsburgh/Monroeville Convention Center, 101 Mall Blvd., Monroeville, PA, 15146
- **Thursday, Aug. 11:** Crowne Plaza Liberty Convention Center, 260 Mall Blvd., King of Prussia, PA, 19406
- **Tuesday, Aug. 23:** Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey, 4650 Lindle Road, Harrisburg, PA, 17111

Information about the upcoming forums and related materials are available online at www.insurance.pa.gov; click on "Health Insurance Exchanges Forums."



Free Aging Webinars

The American Society on Aging (ASA) offers many web seminars, some free to non-members. Check out their webinar page for a listing of their latest offerings.

<http://asaging.org/web-seminars>

Articles of Interest

In Defense of Antidepressants

Interesting article discussing recent claims that antidepressants don't work.

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/10/opinion/sunday/10antidepressants.html?_r=1&emc=eta1

First Study of Its Kind Shows Benefits of Providing Medical Insurance to Poor

When poor people are given medical insurance, they not only find regular doctors and see doctors more often but they also feel better, are less depressed and are better able to maintain financial stability, according to a new, large-scale study that provides the first rigorously controlled assessment of the impact of Medicaid.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/07/health/policy/07medicaid.html?emc=eta1>

Parkinson's Patients Still Prescribed Antipsychotics Despite Warning

Antipsychotic drugs are still prescribed to more than half of U.S. patients with Parkinson's disease and psychosis even though a warning that these drugs can worsen...

http://www.caring.com/news/parkinsons-patients-still-prescribed-antipsychotics-despite-warning?utm_medium=email&utm_source=suggests&utm_campaign=park&utm_content=20110719

Mobile Sensors Track Health of Elderly in Pilot Test

A small pilot study of wireless mobile sensors used by a group of retirees suggests the technology may be useful in detecting meaningful changes in seniors' health, researchers at Dartmouth College report.

<http://www.healthfinder.gov/news/newsstory.aspx?docID=654735>

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www.olderPA.org/newsletter

