

Dear Colleagues:

Re: Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics

[insert name of LTC facility] will be participating in the Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics (AUA) Project.

The AUA project is supported by the Alberta Health Services Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network. It is anticipated that by March 2015, all Alberta LTC facilities will have implemented the AUA Guideline and Toolkit of resources. The province is targeting a usage rate of 20% by March 2018. Usage in Alberta from 2013/14 data is just under 26%. Many of the pilot sites have surpassed this target, and are noticing:

- A reduction in side-effects such as insomnia, confusion, falls and agitation
- Improved quality of life: improvements in alertness, communication, independence, appetite, mobility and ability to participate in activities and relationships.
- Quieter, calmer care centre environments. Research has shown no benefit for many of the behaviours antipsychotics are commonly prescribed for, such as restlessness and repetitive vocalization.
- Improved workplace satisfaction for staff.

The nursing staff will receive education and resources to support alternative approaches to behaviour management. They will also communicate with families about this project and collect non-identifying baseline and ongoing data.

You are not being asked to do anything at this point in time, other than continue to:

- Be mindful of the clinical indications for the use of antipsychotic medications
- Continue your efforts to taper antipsychotics: after 3 months, when behaviour stabilizes, if there is no improvement demonstrated, if behaviours worsen, or if side-effects are evident.
- Be open to non-pharmaceutical behaviour management strategies

For further information, please see:

- [Optimized Prescribing with Seniors](#), by Dr. James Silvius, The Messenger, May 2014.
- [Clinical Indications for Prescribing Antipsychotic Medication](#), in the [Prescribing Medication section of the AUA Toolkit](#).

Thank you in advance for your understanding and assistance.

[Medical director for the site]