

AUA project information for family/alternate decision makers

Sample of a letter that could be sent/given to them or included in a newsletter

Please include the Choosing Wisely or Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics in Dementia brochure

To families on unit [insert name]

In Alberta, many long term care centres are now working to reduce the use of antipsychotic medicines. Alberta Health Services is supporting this, through the Seniors Health Strategic Clinical Network.

Antipsychotics are medicines often given to people with dementia to manage behaviours. Although there can be good reasons for prescribing this medicine, their use should be limited due to side effects.

Possible side effects include: sleepiness, restlessness, agitation, confusion, and an increased risk of falls, strokes and death. Research also shows that antipsychotics don't help with most behaviours in people with dementia.

Our care team, which includes [insert names or roles] will review each resident taking these medicines. We will look for the reasons why the medicine was started, and if there might be better ways to respond to their behaviours. Decreasing or stopping the antipsychotic medication will be considered.

When the time comes to review the medicines for your family member, we will contact you. Your input and feedback will be so valuable. As partners in your loved one's care we would like to work with you to find ways to help your family member cope with their dementia – without the use of antipsychotics. If changes are made to the antipsychotic medicines, we will monitor the person closely and discuss any changes with you.

We have included a brochure that includes more information about the use of antipsychotic medicines.

If you have any questions about this project, please feel free to contact [insert the name].