

To: AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia Behavioral Health Providers

Date: April 12, 2017

Subject: **Prescribing Multiple Antipsychotic Medicines**

Summary: The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) recommends that clinicians avoid the use of multiple antipsychotic medications for children and adolescents. AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia is asking providers to implement the AACAP's recommendations.

Background

The side effects of antipsychotics include metabolic disturbance, weight gain, extrapyramidal side effects, and hyperprolactinemia. These medications can also increase a child's risk for developing serious metabolic health complications that are associated with poor cardiometabolic outcomes in adulthood.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) recommends that clinicians avoid the concurrent use of multiple antipsychotic medications for children and adolescents. In accordance with clinical literature and Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS[®]) requirements, AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia is encouraging its providers to carefully consider limiting the use of multiple antipsychotics.

To comply with HEDIS requirements, we ask providers to implement the following recommendation from the AACAP:

Prior to the initiation of and during treatment with an Atypical Antipsychotic Medication, the general guidelines that pertain to the prescription of psychotropic medications should be followed. These principles include a careful diagnostic assessment, attention to comorbid medical conditions, a review of other drugs the patient is being prescribed, the creation of a multi-disciplinary plan, including education and psychotherapeutic interventions for the treatment and monitoring of improvement, and a thorough discussion of the risks and benefits.

Action Needed

Given the risk of metabolic health complications and the potential lifelong consequences, metabolic monitoring is important to ensure appropriate management of children and adolescents on antipsychotic medications. Please be sure to order metabolic (LDL-C, HbA1C) testing for your patients at least once per year.

Questions:

If you have questions about this communication, please contact your AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia Provider Network Account Executive or Provider Services at 202-408-2237 or 1-888-656-2383.