



**State of Louisiana**  
Department of Health and Hospitals  
Health Standards Section

May 1, 2015

To: Nursing Home Administrative Staff

From: Cecile D Castello, RN, BSN,  
Director of the Health Standards Section  
Department of Health and Hospitals

Re: Update on Louisiana efforts to support the CMS Initiative to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cecile D. Castello".

Since the launch of the National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes, significant reductions in the prevalence of antipsychotic use in long-stay nursing home residents have been documented across the nation. Data released by CMS on the Quarterly Prevalence of Antipsychotic Use for Long-Stay Residents for 2011Q2 to 2014Q4 shows a national decline in antipsychotic use by 20.1% since the start of the initiative. The good news for Louisiana is the data shows a slow but steady decline for our state with a 16.0% decline. The unfortunate news is that our state is ranked #1 in the nation for the highest overall percentage rate of antipsychotic use. The current national percentage rate is 19.1% and the Louisiana percentage rate is 25.0%. Although we are making significant strides in this endeavor, there is still much work remaining.

CMS has established updated national goals for reducing the use of antipsychotic medications in long-stay nursing home residents by 25 percent by the end of 2015 and 30 percent by the end of 2016. These goals build on the progress made to date and express the partnership's commitment to continue this important effort. While the initial focus was and remains on reducing the use of antipsychotic medications, the partnership's larger mission is to enhance the use of non-pharmacologic approaches and person-centered dementia care practices.

The Louisiana Dementia Partnership is currently completing the action plans for state fiscal year 2014-2015. The action items that have been completed include: statewide workshops to educate providers and practitioners on the details of the CMS initiative and regulatory aspects; the distribution of useful resources/tools to assist facilities to implement changes in current practice; the opportunity for open

dialogue to discuss the barriers faced with antipsychotic reductions; and the piloting of a method to address and eliminate off-label use of antipsychotics through an onsite consultation with four volunteer nursing homes in our state. The partnership goal for the remainder of this fiscal year is to begin implementing some of the recommendations that emerged as a result of this year's endeavors.

Fiscal year 2015-2016 action plans for the partnership are in the finalization stage. The partnership is pooling all available resources to work together to remove the identified barriers to success. Some of the action plan items that you can look forward to this next fiscal year include the following:

- Statewide distribution of laminated pocket guides and algorithms that identify the risks and benefits of antipsychotic medication for people with dementia.
- Development of a step by step guide to antipsychotic medication reduction that will be shared with all nursing facilities.
- LEADER will be updating the link to the Dementia Partnership resource page that is user friendly;
- DHH, including the Health Standards Section, will review the state dementia training requirements and determine if incorporation of the CMS Hand in Hand Toolkit would meet the annual training component of the regulation.
- Statewide workshops are being organized and presented by members of the partnership workgroup to educate providers on identified coding errors on MDS, Drug Regimen Review Process, successes of the collaborative pilot project, and an overview of non-pharmacological interventions to address behaviors related to an unmet need or distress.
- Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area will be providing dementia training and distributing "Recollection Collection Kits" to 25 nursing homes in the Baton Rouge, Lafayette, New Orleans, and Slidell area with the highest rate of antipsychotic medication use for residents with Dementia.
- Quality Insights Quality Innovation Network (of which eQHealth Solutions in Baton Rouge is a member), will present a webinar to provide instructions on the use of a "Toolkit for Improving Dementia Care in Nursing Homes". The toolkit will be available for you online at <http://www.qualityinsights-qin.org/Resources.aspx>, in an effort to assist all nursing homes in reducing the unnecessary use of antipsychotics.
- B&F Consulting will present a joint training to surveyor supervisors and to nursing home clinical leaders. Given that eliminating off-label use of antipsychotics represents a significant change in the standard of practice, this training will be provided to learn about the why and how of doing so, including ways of individualizing care.

- Statewide workshops will be presented to physicians and pharmacists on the dangers of antipsychotic use in people with dementia.
- Health Standards Section will schedule face to face meetings with those facilities identified with a high percentage of antipsychotic use to discuss efforts being made to address any potential off-label use of these medications. Resources will be offered as needed.
- The partnership will continue to monitor CMS data to track and trend areas of high usage and work to address possible concerns.
- LNHA is working to bring in speakers to their Fall Conference to address some the issues in regards to antipsychotic use in nursing homes.

Notifications of all partnership activities will be sent via email to all nursing homes administrators. We strongly encourage the participation of all nursing homes at these events.

Health Standards Section and the Louisiana Dementia Partnership would like to congratulate and thank nursing home providers who have developed step by step processes within their homes to work on the elimination of the off-label use of antipsychotics. Data comparisons are being reviewed and do show that many of our facilities are making progress in the downward direction. A few of our homes have decreased their use by 20 – 25% since the initiative began. We realize that this is a monumental task when added in the midst of all of the other challenges you face on a daily basis. Once again we say thank you for your efforts and keep up the great work!

Nursing Home providers who have not taken concerted steps to reduce and eliminate the off-label use of these medications should now begin.

The Health Standards Section emphatically supports the efforts of the state and national dementia partnerships. All nursing homes in Louisiana must join forces with these efforts to ensure positive outcomes and quality of life for this population being served.

To learn more, click on the CMS National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes homepage at: <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/National-Partnership-to-Improve-Dementia-Care-in-Nursing-Homes.html> .