



BlueCross BlueShield
of New Mexico

Multiple Concurrent Antipsychotics in Children and Adolescents (APC)

Helping members get the most from
their health care benefit plan.



HEDIS® Measure for Multiple Concurrent Antipsychotics in Children and Adolescents

The APC initiative focuses on lowering the number of children and adolescents who are being treated with more than one antipsychotic medication concurrently.

Measurement Structure

As part of our commitment to quality, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM) studies claims data based on the following structure related to this HEDIS requirement:

- This measure pertains to people under the age of 18.
- It includes people who are being treated with more than one antipsychotic medication for at least 90 days.
- This excludes people who are transitioning from one antipsychotic medication to another.
- Our goal is to help and encourage contracted prescribers of antipsychotic medications to children and adolescents to ensure that those prescriptions are appropriate and safely monitored.

Did you know?

- High-risk antipsychotic medication use has rapidly expanded in recent years.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has researched and noted inappropriate prescribing of antipsychotics when not clinically indicated.
- There are potentially serious side effects and drug interactions with these medications.

Common Health Concerns when Taking Antipsychotics and Potential Long-Term Side Effects

- Weight gain/diabetes/hyperlipidemia
- Seizures
- Elevated prolactin levels
- Cardiovascular issues
- Tardive and withdrawal dyskinesias
- Cataracts

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Best Practice Strategies May Include:

- Research the most current available evidence in scientific literature for the medication.
- Obtain a full family history of disorders that might be side effects of the medication (such as diabetes and cataracts).
- Adopt a “start low and go slow” approach to find lowest effective dose; target dosing should be supported in the literature.
- When one antipsychotic fails, an alternative class of drugs should be considered.
- Frequent monitoring of side effects should be performed; monitor Body Mass Index (BMI) and lipid profiles at baseline and at regular intervals.
- Measure abnormal involuntary movements at baseline and frequent intervals during treatment and tapering of the medication.
- Abrupt discontinuation of antipsychotic medications is generally not recommended.

Sources

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