

Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert

New Alzheimer's Drug Approved

There's a new treatment option for people with advanced Alzheimer's disease.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday gave its approval to memantine, which has long been sold in Europe. "The approval of memantine is good news for Alzheimer's disease patients," said FDA Commissioner Dr. Mark McClellan. "This is the first drug shown to have an effect on the symptoms of moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease, and shows a low incidence of minor side effects."

Forest Laboratories will sell the drug in the United States under the brand name Namenda. For more details on the FDA's action, go to the Web site <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2003/NEW00961.html>.