

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Industry News: Look For Expanded Efforts To Combat Improper Antipsychotic Prescribing

Nursing homes won't be the only healthcare providers in the glaring spotlight of antipsychotic prescribing for older adults, thanks to a recent **Government Accountability Office** (GAO) report.

The recently published report investigates the prevalence of antipsychotic drug use in older adults with dementia who reside inside and outside nursing homes. The GAO examined:

1. To what extent healthcare providers are prescribing antipsychotic drugs to older adults with dementia who are living inside and outside nursing homes;
2. What is known from selected experts and published research about factors contributing to such prescribing; and
3. To what extent the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** (HHS) has taken action to reduce the use of antipsychotic drugs by older adults with dementia.

The GAO analyzed 2012 Medicare Part D drug event claims and nursing home assessment data to provide prescribing data for its report. The antipsychotic prescribing data excluded older adults with diagnoses of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

About one-third of older adults with dementia who spent more than 100 days in a nursing home in 2012 were prescribed an antipsychotic, the GAO found. That same year, about 14 percent of Medicare Part D beneficiaries living outside of a nursing home were prescribed an antipsychotic drug.

The GAO recommended that HHS expand its outreach and educational efforts focused on reducing antipsychotic use among older adults with dementia, specifically to include those living outside of nursing homes. The GAO wants HHS to update the National Alzheimer's Plan. HHS agreed with the GAO's recommendation.

Link: To read the GAO report, "Antipsychotic Drug Use: HHS Has Initiatives to Reduce Use among Older Adults in Nursing Homes, but Should Expand Efforts to Other Settings," go to www.gao.gov/assets/670/668221.pdf.