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Secretary

THOMAS R. DEHNER  
Medicaid Director

April 2009

Dear Colleague,

The Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and the MassHealth Pharmacy Program are writing to enlist your help and cooperation.

Behavioral health medications account for nearly \$190 million, or 37% of the total annual MassHealth pharmacy budget. Atypical antipsychotics represent over \$93 million, or 18.5% of the annual pharmacy costs. Over 6,000 members receive more than one atypical antipsychotic for 60 days (time allowed for tapering), at a cost of over \$10 million per year.

MassHealth, in partnership with DMH, has identified several prescribing practices that, if adopted, will improve patient care while reducing costs. We strongly encourage you to voluntarily adopt these practices.

#### Start Now

The Department of Mental Health and the MassHealth Pharmacy Program, in consultation with a group of psychopharmacology experts and experienced clinicians, recommend immediate implementation of the following interventions.

1. Reduce the use of brand-name antipsychotics by starting or, when appropriate, changing patients to generic therapies.
2. Reduce the simultaneous prescribing of two or more atypical antipsychotics for the same patient.
3. Reduce the use of four, five, six, and even seven behavioral health medications for the same patient at the same time (often independent of "medical" medications).

In addition to adopting clinical strategies, every practitioner must consider whether there are less costly, effective treatments available. (Please see attached list of frequently prescribed behavioral health medications and their cost.)

In addition, at the end of this fiscal year, the MassHealth Pharmacy Program and DMH expect to consider whether alternative interventions, such as a more expansive prior-authorization program, are needed in order to ascertain the medical necessity of prescribed drugs.

We will provide you with regular updates of pharmacy expenses by category at [www.mass.gov/druglist](http://www.mass.gov/druglist). If you have additional suggestions regarding how we can reduce behavioral health medication costs while ensuring high-quality care, or suggestions for other interventions, please e-mail us at [masshealthdruglist@state.ma.us](mailto:masshealthdruglist@state.ma.us).

Please join us as we redouble our efforts to ensure that all of our MassHealth members are provided with high-quality, medically necessary prescriptions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Foti, MD  
Deputy Commissioner  
Clinical and Professional Services  
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

Paul L. Jeffrey, PharmD  
Senior Director  
Office of Clinical Affairs  
Director of Pharmacy  
MassHealth

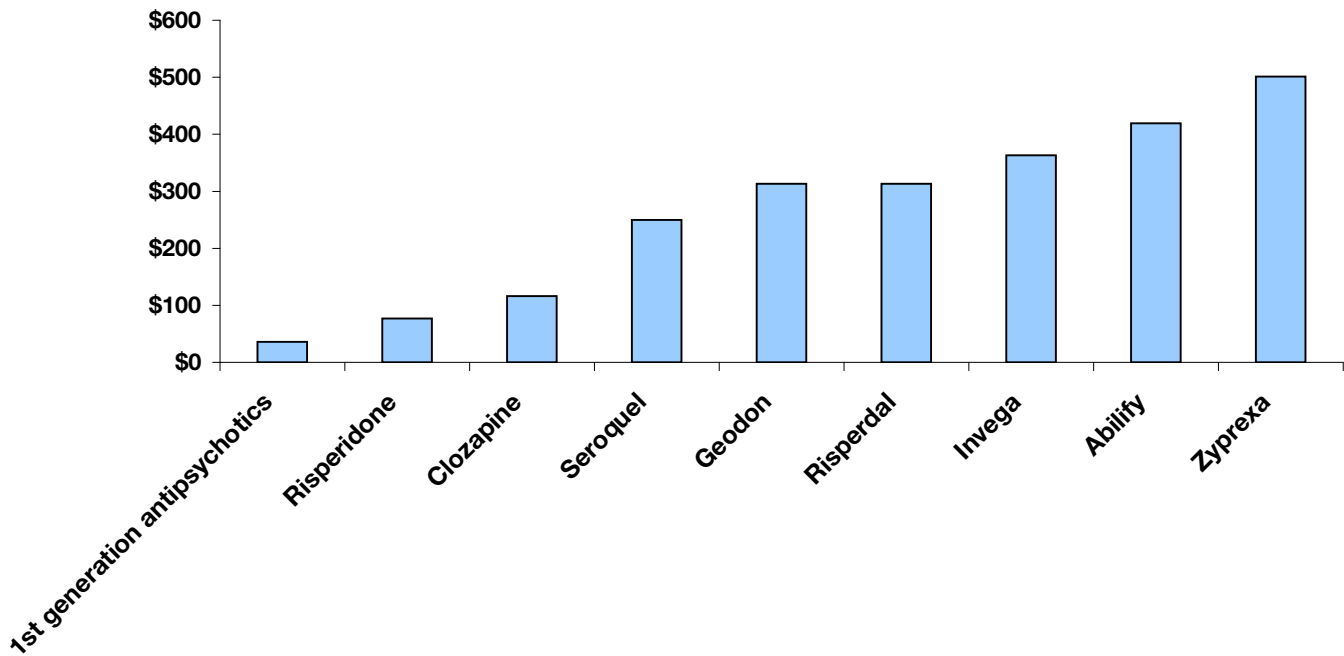


**Office of Clinical Affairs  
Pharmacy Program / Analysis Unit**

**Antipsychotic Costs - Blended  
January 2009**

| <u>Drug name</u>              | <u>Average Cost per Claim</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1st generation antipsychotics | \$36                          |
| Risperidone                   | \$77                          |
| Clozapine                     | \$116                         |
| Seroquel                      | \$250                         |
| Geodon                        | \$313                         |
| Risperdal                     | \$313                         |
| Invega                        | \$363                         |
| Abilify                       | \$419                         |
| Zyprexa                       | \$501                         |

**Average Cost per Claim**



This graph represents the blended costs for all prescriptions (except Risperdal Consta).

Please see attached table for detailed information.



**Office of Clinical Affairs  
Pharmacy Program / Analysis Unit**

**Antipsychotic Costs  
February 2009**

*Average cost for a 30 day supply*

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Perphenazine 2mg (60tabs) | \$21.84 |
| Perphenazine 4mg (60tabs) | \$51.22 |
| Perphenazine 8mg (60tabs) | \$61.99 |

|                           |         |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Haloperidol 2mg (60tabs)  | \$8.99  |
| Haloperidol 5mg (60tabs)  | \$10.31 |
| Haloperidol 10mg (60tabs) | \$73.30 |

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| Abilify 2 mg  | \$403.31 |
| Abilify 5 mg  | \$403.31 |
| Abilify 10 mg | \$403.31 |
| Abilify 15 mg | \$403.31 |
| Abilify 20 mg | \$569.10 |
| Abilify 30 mg | \$569.10 |

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Seroquel 25mg      | \$75.59  |
| Seroquel 50 mg     | \$122.29 |
| Seroquel 100 mg    | \$127.57 |
| Seroquel 200 mg    | \$238.01 |
| Seroquel 300 mg    | \$311.13 |
| Seroquel 400 mg    | \$365.13 |
| Seroquel XR 200 mg | \$228.36 |
| Seroquel XR 300 mg | \$298.47 |
| Seroquel XR 400 mg | \$350.25 |

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| Geodon 20 mg | \$182.69 |
| Geodon 40 mg | \$182.69 |
| Geodon 60 mg | \$221.06 |
| Geodon 80 mg | \$221.06 |

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Zyprexa 2.5 mg | \$219.15 |
| Zyprexa 5 mg   | \$258.15 |
| Zyprexa 7.5 mg | \$313.43 |
| Zyprexa 10 mg  | \$387.30 |
| Zyprexa 15 mg  | \$579.45 |
| Zyprexa 20 mg. | \$771.44 |

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Invega XR 3 mg | \$354.33 |
| Invega XR 6 mg | \$354.33 |
| Invega XR 9 mg | \$492.98 |

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Risperidone 0.25 mg | \$35.12  |
| Risperidone 0.5 mg  | \$38.25  |
| Risperidone 1 mg    | \$40.48  |
| Risperidone 2 mg    | \$65.63  |
| Risperidone 3 mg    | \$76.56  |
| Risperidone 4 mg    | \$107.01 |

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Risperdal 0.25 mg | \$123.06 |
| Risperdal 0.5 mg  | \$134.74 |
| Risperdal 1 mg    | \$143.06 |
| Risperdal 2mg.    | \$237.07 |
| Risperdal 3 mg    | \$277.93 |
| Risperdal 4mg     | \$372.27 |

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Fluphenazine Dec 25mg/cc - 5cc | \$61.21 |
| Haloperidol Dec 100mg/cc - 5cc | \$25.70 |
| Haloperidol Dec 50mg/cc - 5cc  | \$21.80 |

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Risperdal Consta 25mg/cc - 2cc   | \$516.22   |
| Risperdal Consta 37.5mg/cc - 2cc | \$766.67   |
| Risperdal Consta 50mg/cc - 2cc   | \$1,032.47 |

*Dec = decanoate*

Average cost for a 30-day supply (excluding injectables) for pharmacy claims paid by MassHealth during the week of February 16, 2009. All costs are for 30 tablets unless otherwise specified.