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Dear Prescriber,

MassHealth and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health are writing to you about the prescribing of paliperidone (Invega®) for some of your MassHealth patients. We hope that this information is useful to you and your patient(s).

Comparison Table		
	risperidone	paliperidone
Chemical structure	Parent drug of paliperidone ^{1,2,3}	Active metabolite of risperidone ^{1,2,3}
Side effect profile	No demonstrated difference from paliperidone* ^{1,2,3}	No demonstrated difference from risperidone* ^{1,2,3}
Clinical efficacy	No demonstrated difference from paliperidone*	No demonstrated difference from risperidone*
Cost of 30-day prescription 4mg risperdone vs. 9mg paliperidone	\$36	\$274
Projected yearly cost (MassHealth)	\$3.5 million for 98,600 prescriptions	\$2.2 million for 8,000 prescriptions

*The dose of risperidone is adjusted as needed for patient-specific metabolizing rate.

An extensive review of the literature does not support any clinically significant differences between paliperidone and risperidone. The two medications share a very similar pharmacological structure and profile. Typically, when medications are so structurally similar, a “head-to-head” trial is considered the “gold standard” for identifying differences between them. In this instance, no such studies have been conducted.

We have attached a list of your MassHealth patients who are currently prescribed paliperidone. Please review your cases carefully, and as clinically appropriate, reconsider continuing treatment with paliperidone, a much more costly product than risperidone.

continued ▶

Thank you for joining us in this important and focused effort to help ensure that our members receive medically necessary prescriptions that are safe and effective, and result in high quality and cost-effective care.

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

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2. Dolder C, Nelson M, Deyo Z. Paliperidone for schizophrenia. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm*. 2008;65:403-413.
3. Marino J, Caballero J. Paliperidone extended-release for the treatment of schizophrenia. *Pharmacotherapy* 2008;28:1283-1298.