

LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice

Media Advisory: Latest Federal Data Reveal Widespread Antipsychotic Drugging of Nursing Home Residents with Dementia

Despite Industry's Claims of "Success," Approx. 20% of Residents STILL Receiving Powerful, Potentially Lethal Drugs

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New York, NY, June 5, 2018— The inappropriate antipsychotic drugging of nursing home residents, particularly those with dementia, is a widespread, national problem. Despite the Food and Drug Administration's 'black box' warnings against using antipsychotics on elderly patients, they are frequently used to treat the so-called behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia.

These and other psychotropic drugs are too often used as a form of chemical restraint, sedating residents so that not only their behaviors but also the underlying causes for those behaviors do not have to be addressed by staff. In addition to destroying social and emotional well-being, these drugs greatly increase risks of stroke, heart attack, diabetes, Parkinsonism, and falls. They are **not** clinically indicated for dementia-related psychosis. They **are** associated with a significant increase in death when given to elderly people with dementia.

Today, we are announcing the release of the [Latest Drugging Rates for Every US Nursing Home](#).

These data indicate that approximately 20% of residents - over 250,000 vulnerable residents - are being administered powerful antipsychotic drugs in our nursing homes today. Only 2% of the population will ever have a diagnosis for a condition which the government uses when it risk-adjusts for potentially appropriate use. "Too many residents and families are not even made aware of the dangerous potential side-effects of these drugs, or the fact that they are not clinically indicated for so-called dementia "behaviors," said Richard Mollot, LTCCC's executive director.

In addition to data on nursing home drugging rates, LTCCC's website, www.nursinghome411.org, has a range of information and resources for consumers and the public, including:

[Issue Alert on Antipsychotic Drugs](#): This alert explains how and why this is a significant issue for so many nursing home residents. It includes a case study of a citation for inappropriate antipsychotic drugging.

[Dementia Care Advocacy Toolkit](#): Free resources to help families, and those who work with them, know their rights and advocate for less drugging and better care for their residents with dementia.

Please see our new timeline, below, on antipsychotic drugging in America's nursing homes.

LTCCC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the rights and welfare of long term care consumers in all settings, including nursing homes, assisted living facilities and in their communities, by strengthening regulation, surveillance and enforcement.

For more information on this and other long term care issues, visit www.nursinghome411.org.

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Timeline on Antipsychotic Drugging in America's Nursing Homes: 1987 - 2018

Why This Is An Important Issue & How Both Government And The Nursing Home Industry Have Failed Nursing Home Residents, Their Families, And US Taxpayers

1987: Nursing Home Reform Law prohibits inappropriate drugging and use of chemical restraints.

2005: FDA Issues "Black-Box Warning" on serious risks of atypical antipsychotic drugs for elderly patients with dementia.

2011: US HHS Inspector General Levinson [states](#):

(1) **"Government, taxpayers, nursing home residents, as well as their families and caregivers should be outraged"** by the "overmedication" of nursing home residents.

(2) "A little **more than half of the antipsychotic drug claims for which Medicare paid should not have been covered** because the claimed drugs were not used for medically accepted indications or not documented as provided to patients." [Emphases added.]

2012: CMS (US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) launches "National Partnership" campaign to tackle inappropriate drugging. Nursing home industry commits to campaign's initial, "modest" goal to reduce drugging by 15% over next 10 months.

2014: CMS and nursing home lobbyists announce that self-described "modest" 10 month goal has been accomplished after 22 months. They state that campaign has been a "success."

[LTCCC study](#) finds: (1) "three years after the US OIG's alarming report, almost 300,000 nursing home residents are being given antipsychotics..." and (2) "80,000 residents are being given these drugs today, at great personal and financial cost, simply **because CMS and the industry failed to achieve and sustain their initial goal.**" [Emphasis added.]

2018: Widespread antipsychotic drugging continues, at considerable human and financial cost:

(1) Human Rights Watch releases [Abuse of Antipsychotics in Nursing Homes: The Human Tragedy](#).

(2) Nursing home industry lobbyists at the American Health Care Association tell policymakers and the public that the effort to reduce unnecessary drugging has been a "[success](#)."

(3) LTCCC's analysis of federal data indicates that **approximately 20% of nursing home resident – over 250,000 individuals – are still being given antipsychotic drugs.** Less than 2% of the population will ever have a condition for which CMS risk-adjusts for potentially appropriate antipsychotic drugging.