

Education....Empowerment....Safety:
Understanding the Use of Psychotropic Medications in Our Children

In partnership with BEACON (Best Evidence Advancing Child health in Ohio Now!), the State of Ohio is working with various healthcare leaders, stakeholders, and medical professionals to evaluate and improve prescribing of atypical antipsychotics and other psychotropic medications to the youngest members of the Medicaid population. Over the next three years, the state will invest \$1 million to launch this new quality improvement initiative.

Many children on Medicaid have complex behavioral health care needs. Their parents and caregivers often struggle to understand their health problems and find the right source and types of care. This is particularly the case for children living in foster care. These young people are more likely to experience trauma and social-emotional issues early in life and are prescribed atypical antipsychotic medications more often than other children in Medicaid. Some are prescribed multiple medications outside of accepted standards of care, leading to concern about adverse effects that could impact them for years to come.

The goal of this collaborative initiative is to increase timely access to safe and effective psychotropic medications and other treatments for children who need it, improve pediatric patient health outcomes for these children, and reduce potential medication-related adverse effects.

Over the course of the next three years, this initiative will:

- **Develop technical resources** supporting best practice and clinical guidelines for safe and effective use of psychotropic medications under the guidance of a panel consisting of Ohio and national and psychiatric experts;
- **Improve the use of best practices** and clinical guidelines for psychotropic medications by providing second opinion consultation, educational outreach and technical support opportunities to Medicaid providers who are considering initiating psycho-pharmacological treatment or who are currently prescribing psychotropic medications in their practices; and
- **Advance the knowledge and understanding of parents or caregivers**, pediatric patients and child-serving workers from schools and child-welfare systems regarding the safe and effective use of psychotropic medications by developing targeted resources especially for them.