

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (Medical Director, Physician, Physician Extender),

In 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) launched **The Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes**. Minnesota has embraced this national initiative through the creation of the **Minnesota Partnership to Improve Dementia Care**. The Minnesota Partnership works together with state nursing homes by supporting their efforts to eliminate inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications through the use of effective person-centered non-pharmacological management of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). **We ask you to assist in our efforts to improve dementia care by supporting nursing home teams to reduce and eliminate the inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications.** Resources and best practices in person-centered care and non-pharmacological management are available on the **Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Home website** ([www.nhqualitycampaign.org](http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org)) to help you reduce antipsychotic prescribing in your facility.

The national partnership was created in response to the 2011 report by the *Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (OIG)*: **Medicare Atypical Antipsychotic Drug Claims for Elderly Nursing Home report** (<http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-07-08-00150.pdf>). The report surmised that too many nursing homes employ antipsychotic medications in ways that violate federal standards for unnecessary medication use. Prescribing antipsychotic medication for BPSD is sometimes appropriate. However, use of antipsychotic drugs has significant health risks in this population. This report, and other recent reports, has led to heightened regulatory, legislative, and consumer awareness of the potential dangers these medications may cause for individuals with dementia.

CMS has released new guidance related to the care of persons with dementia and unnecessary medication use. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) surveyors and investigators will implement the revised guidance effective October 1, 2013. These guidelines can be found on the MDH Clinical Web Window (<http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Provider-Enrollment-and-Certification/SurveyCertificationGenInfo/Downloads/Survey-and-Cert-Letter-13-35.pdf>).

Thank you for your efforts to improve the quality of life and the quality of care for Minnesota nursing home residents. Eliminating unnecessary antipsychotic medications is key to these efforts.

Sincerely,

The MN Partnership to Improve Dementia Care\*

\*Minnesota partners in this effort include representatives from Act on Alzheimer's, Aging Services of Minnesota, The Alzheimer's Association, Care Providers of Minnesota, Ecumen, HealthEast Bethesda Hospital, Minnesota Board on Aging, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Medical Directors Association, Minnesota Veterans Homes, Office of Ombudsmen for Long-Term Care, Stratis Health, and the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists – MN Chapter.