

# The Importance of First-Line Psychosocial Care



Psychosocial care, which includes behavioral interventions, psychological therapies, and skills training among other forms of non-pharmacological care, is the recommended first-line treatment option for children and adolescents diagnosed with nonpsychotic conditions such as attention-deficit disorder and disruptive behaviors.<sup>1</sup> Although antipsychotic medications may serve as effective treatment for a narrowly defined set of psychiatric disorders in children and adolescents, they can elevate the risk for developing serious metabolic health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and other health problems into adulthood. An increased level of physical activity, improved sleep, and a well-balanced diet, as well as metabolic lab testing are proven interventions that can help reduce risk.<sup>2</sup>

## Provider Tips

- ▶ Before prescribing children and adolescents any antipsychotic medication, complete or refer patients for a trial of first-line, evidence-based psychosocial care.
- ▶ If medication is warranted, a trial of therapy prior to medication initiation is recommended.
  - At least two visits in an outpatient, intensive outpatient hospitalization setting is an example.
- ▶ Coordinate care with all medical and behavioral health providers.
- ▶ Partner with the health plan, address barriers, and refer patients to community-based and case management services.
- ▶ Provide psychoeducation to the patient and family, including how to take the medication, expected side effects, lab work, and talking to the prescriber before stopping any medications.
- ▶ Emphasize the importance of proper sleep, support, diet, and exercise.
- ▶ Utilize telehealth when applicable and submit the correct claim codes.
- ▶ Schedule routine annual monitoring of the metabolic profile:
  - HbA1C
  - Serum LDL-C
  - Serum Cholesterol

## Measures

- ▶ First-Line Psychosocial Care for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics (APP)
- ▶ Metabolic Monitoring for Children and Adolescents on Antipsychotics (APM)

## Additional Support

- ▶ American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry: [www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)
- ▶ American Heart Association: [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

Source:

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_Youth/Resource\\_Centers/ADHD\\_Resource\\_Center/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Resource\\_Centers/ADHD\\_Resource\\_Center/Home.aspx?hkey=263af418-94e9-4c33-a6c7-e058f81a80e5#treatment](https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/Home.aspx?hkey=263af418-94e9-4c33-a6c7-e058f81a80e5#treatment)

<sup>2</sup> Bostwick, J.R. & Murphy, L.R. (2017, May 29). Metabolic monitoring of antipsychotic medications: what psychiatrists need to know. <https://www.psychiatrytimes.com/view/metabolic-monitoring-antipsychotic-medications-what-psychiatrists-need-know>