



Information for Healthcare Improvement

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Inappropriate Medications in Use by 20% of Florida's Elderly

Tampa, Florida, October 21, 2010 - FMQAI, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Florida, is collaborating with several Florida-based Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans on the Florida Medication Safety Initiative, a statewide effort that aims to reduce the use of potentially inappropriate medications in the elderly.

As we age, our bodies tend to handle and react to medicines differently than in younger years. This variance in reaction can lead to serious and unwanted effects such as confusion, depression, falling, or other serious health consequences. As a result, there are guidelines for medicines that are deemed potentially inappropriate for patients 65 and older to take. Yet, based on data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, approximately 20% of Florida's elderly Medicare Part D beneficiaries are taking at least one drug that is considered potentially inappropriate.

According to Pharmacist Sophia Cherry, Project Coordinator for the FMQAI Drug Safety project, six commonly prescribed medications account for more than 70% of potentially inappropriate medications prescribed to Medicare Part D beneficiaries in Florida. Cherry goes on to say, "The primary goals of the Drug Safety project are to reduce the use of high-risk medications in the elderly and to provide resources to improve the recognition and appropriate management of Drug-Drug Interactions (DDIs)." FMQAI Patient Safety Project Director, Amy Osborn, BS, NHA, concurs, "By fostering quality improvement efforts on these important drug safety topics, it is anticipated that adverse drug events, which can lead to increased morbidity, mortality, and healthcare costs, can be reduced and even prevented."

FMQAI, which serves over 3 million Medicare beneficiaries in Florida, works under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, as the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Florida. For more information about FMQAI and the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization program, visit www.fmqai.com

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