Evaluating the Impact of Interventions by a Multidisciplinary Pediatric Behavioral Health Medication Initiative Workgroup on Medication Prescribing Trends in a Medicaid Population

Ashley N. Camilo
*University of Massachusetts Medical School*

*Et al.*

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In 2011, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported rates of psychotropic prescriptions for foster and non-foster children in Medicaid to be service in five states. Massachusetts exhibited the highest rate of behavioral health medication (BHM) utilization with 49.3% of all Medicaid children being prescribed a psychotropic medication, and 39.1% of children in foster care prescribed these medications. In 2012, the U.S. GAO reported a higher prevalence of BHM regimens with ≥5 medications in foster care children. Antipsychotic use in children covered by Medicaid was twice as likely compared to those privately insured.

The Massachusetts Medicaid (MassHealth) Pharmacy Program, in collaboration with the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Mental Health implemented the PBHMI in November 2014. Proactively requests prior authorization (PA) for specific medications or combinations of BHMs prescribed to members less than 18 years of age.

A multidisciplinary therapeutic case management (TCM) program consisting of child/adolescent psychiatrists, pharmacists, and a social worker retrospectively reviews complex cases.

Interventions include telephone prescriber outreach by a child/adolescent psychiatrist to discuss opportunities for regimen simplification, drug interactions or toxicity, and to encourage evidence-based practices.

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