Texas Decreases Use of Antipsychotics in Nursing Homes

AUSTIN – Texas nursing facilities have dramatically reduced the inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications for nursing facility residents with dementia, according to a recent report that ranks states on this key measure of long-term care quality.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has several initiatives to help nursing homes reduce the unnecessary use of antipsychotics among residents, and Texas recently experienced the largest reduction of any state in the nation.

Specifically, Texas’ ranking has improved from 51st in the nation in 2013 to 10th in 2018, according to the latest quarterly report from the National Partnership to Improve Dementia Care in Nursing Homes.

“This significant improvement reflects a collaborative effort on the part of Texas nursing facilities and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, which has made reducing the use of these medications in long-term care settings a high priority,” said David Kostroun, the Deputy Executive Commissioner for the regulatory division at HHSC.

Extensive research has confirmed that overuse of antipsychotics can lead to a host of problems for residents and should only be used when clinically necessary.

HHSC is focused on detecting and resolving conditions in nursing facilities that could be harmful to residents’ health, safety, or welfare. Long-term care survey teams help identify high-risk facilities through facility inspections.

“HHSC has worked with higher-risk nursing homes statewide to promote the use of best practices and constructive behavioral interventions to reduce the inappropriate use of these medications,” said Stephanie Muth, the State Medicaid Director. “This new report confirms Texas is moving in the right direction, and we pledge to maintain this momentum and continue improving the quality of life for Texas nursing facility residents.”
Medicaid Quality Monitors visit nursing facilities to educate long-term care providers about evidence-based best practices, conduct staff in-service training, recommend changes to policies or procedures and offer technical assistance.

Since 2014, HHSC has spearheaded several programs promoting non-drug therapy or interventions, including the Music and Memory program, Texas Reducing Antipsychotics in Nursing Facilities and dementia care professional training opportunities, and Virtual Dementia Tours.

For more information about these programs go to https://hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/long-term-care-providers/nursing-facilities/quality-monitoring-program/evidence-based-best-practices/appropriate-use-antipsychotic-medications