

# Antipsychotic and Antidepressant Medication Adherence



Schizophrenia is a chronic and disabling psychiatric disorder that often requires medication treatment. Symptoms include hallucinations, illogical thinking, incoherent speech, and memory impairment. Patients using antipsychotic medications as prescribed have reduced risk of relapse or hospitalization.<sup>1</sup> Major depression can lead to serious impairment in sleep patterns, appetite, concentration, energy, self-esteem, and suicide when left untreated. Effective medication treatment can improve clinical outcomes, reduce medical expenses, and improve a person's daily functioning. Providers play a key role with patient antidepressant medication adherence, monitoring treatment effectiveness, and identifying and managing side effects.<sup>2</sup>

## Provider Tips

- ▶ Complete a comprehensive exam before diagnosing and prescribing, co-existing substance use disorders are common and can undermine effectiveness and adherence to medication.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Partner with the health plan, address barriers, and refer patients to community based and case management services.
- ▶ Coordinate care with all medical and behavioral health providers.
- ▶ Consider the use of long-acting injectable antipsychotic medications.
- ▶ Treat with a combination of medication and therapy services.
- ▶ Emphasize the importance of proper sleep, support, diet, and exercise to enhance medication effectiveness.
- ▶ Monitor response to treatment with a standardized tool such as the Patient Healthcare Questionnaire (PHQ-9).
- ▶ Discuss the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline ([988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)) with patients and family.

## Measures

- ▶ Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals with Schizophrenia (SAA)
- ▶ Antidepressant Medication Management (AMM)

## Additional Support

- ▶ National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): [www.nami.org](https://www.nami.org)
- ▶ Mental Health.gov: [www.mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov)
- ▶ National Institute of Mental Health: [www.nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Sources:

1. <https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/adherence-to-antipsychotic-medications-for-individuals-with-schizophrenia/>
2. <https://www.ncqa.org/hedis/measures/antidepressant-medication-management/>