



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor – Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor – Nelson J. Sabatini, Secretary

Developmental Disabilities Administration

Diane K. Coughlin, Director

### EDUCATIONAL ALERT!!!

TO: All DDA Service Providers

FROM: Diane K. Coughlin, Director *DKC*  
Developmental Disabilities Administration

SUBJECT: Multiple uses of high dosages of medications, i.e. atypical antipsychotic.

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The Mortality Review Committee (MRC) was established by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) through legislation effective October 2001. The MRC evaluates causes or factors contributing to deaths of individuals in programs and facilities operated or licensed by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and the Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA).

The MRC has expressed concerns about the multi uses of high doses of medications which could have attributed to deaths. The Committee felt this was of particular concern in light of the increasing concern with atypical antipsychotic, especially olanzapine (Zyprexa), in increasing blood sugars which has led to multiple deaths, as noted in the literature. Therefore, I am re-issuing the Educational Alert dated June 10, 2003, addressing the use of anti-psychotic medications and closely monitoring medication side effects.

Additionally, all DDA licensed agencies must ensure that all staff providing direct support to individuals receiving psychotropic medications complete the Medication Administration Training Program, to include Unit III, Module II.

Please ensure that this information is shared with appropriate staff. Working together we can reduce and avoid medical complication when using antipsychotic medications, as well as other medications.

