



Welcome Package

IT STARTS WITH ASKING WHY

Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics
in Long-Term Care

Territorial Acknowledgements

In doing work throughout the province, we at Health Quality BC (HQBC) would like to acknowledge that we are living and working with humility and respect on the traditional territories of the First Nations Peoples of British Columbia. We specifically acknowledge and express our gratitude to the keepers of the lands of the ancestral and unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, where our head office is located on what is now colonially known as Vancouver. HQBC also recognizes Métis People and Métis Chartered Communities, as well as the Inuit and urban Indigenous Peoples living across the province on various traditional territories.

About Health Quality BC

Our purpose is improving health care quality across British Columbia.

Our work is to build a foundation of quality, and our impact means better health care for British Columbians.

We do this by delivering the latest knowledge from home and abroad to champion and support high-quality care for every person in BC. This system-wide impact requires creativity, innovative thinking, and evidence-informed strategies to shift culture, improve clinical practice and accelerate health care partners' improvement efforts.

We are uniquely positioned to build strong partnerships with patients and communities, care providers, health leaders, policymakers, senior executives, academics and others. These connections enable us to nurture networks, recognize the needs of BC's health care system and build capacity where it is needed the most. We provide advice and make recommendations to the health system, including the Minister of Health, on matters related to quality of care across the province.

To learn more about our work and how we help improve the quality of care, visit healthqualitybc.ca.

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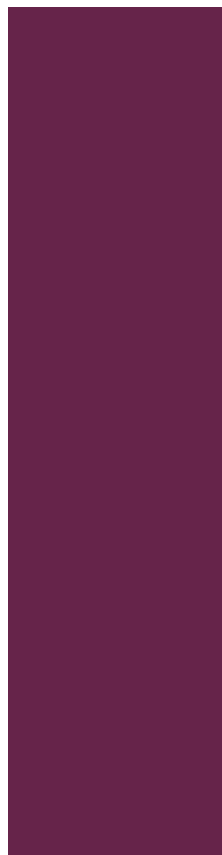
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Welcome

Congratulations on joining the ***“It Starts With Asking Why”***
Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics in Long-Term Care
Action Series!

We are excited that your long-term care (LTC) home is involved in this provincial initiative focused on improving the quality of life for residents, families and staff. Together, we can start asking “why?” Why are we giving this resident antipsychotic medication and what behaviours are we trying to change? By asking this simple question, we can transform the experience of our loved ones living in LTC homes by reimagining the role of medications used to manage behaviours.

This welcome package provides you with the information and resources you will need to get started on your improvement journey.



Why Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics in LTC?

We want to provide the best care possible for our residents, which at times can be difficult because of pressures on our systems and the reality that today’s seniors – our mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers – are living longer than any previous generation. Living longer increases their likelihood of experiencing declines in health that may include developing dementia or other conditions with associated behavioural and psychological symptoms. Sometimes these symptoms result in residents receiving potentially inappropriate medications, such as antipsychotics, which impacts their dignity and well-being. But the issue is complex. Sometimes antipsychotic medications in small doses can be effective in relieving symptoms such as agitation and aggression in some residents. Alternatively, these same medications can also worsen symptoms or cause residents to lose all emotions and can lead to other adverse effects. And ultimately, “the risk of harm significantly outweighs any benefit when medications such as antipsychotics are used to intentionally subdue, sedate or restrain a resident.”¹

DID YOU KNOW?

Research shows the use of antipsychotic medication could lead to irreversible changes and adverse effects, as well as increase the risk of:²

The infographic consists of six colored panels arranged in a house-like shape. The top row has three panels: orange (Metabolic disturbances and urinary tract infections), purple (Weight gain, dry mouth and dizziness), and yellow (Somnolence and/or drowsiness). The bottom row has three panels: purple (Abnormal gait, injury, falls, hip fractures), green (Extrapyramidal side effects – EPS (e.g., drug-induced movement disorders)), and orange (Cardiovascular adverse events and death (e.g., stroke)). Each panel contains an icon related to the text: a person with a magnifying glass, a hand, a heart with lightning bolts, a thought bubble with 'Zzz', a person falling, and a hand with a lightning bolt.

- Metabolic disturbances and urinary tract infections
- Weight gain, dry mouth and dizziness
- Somnolence and/or drowsiness
- Abnormal gait, injury, falls, hip fractures
- Extrapyramidal side effects – EPS (e.g., drug-induced movement disorders)
- Cardiovascular adverse events and death (e.g., stroke)

¹ Health Standards Organization (HSO). Accreditation Canada. Long-Term Care Services. Accreditation Standard 3.2.8

² Antipsychotic (AP) Deprescribing Algorithm. Found at: <https://deprescribing.org/resources/deprescribing-guidelines-algorithms/>

The LTC sector has been dedicating efforts towards the appropriate use of antipsychotics (AUA) for decades and it still remains a priority in our province. The pandemic significantly impacted the momentum gained from the CLeAR initiatives where we witnessed some of the lowest rates in the number of residents who were given antipsychotic medications under potentially inappropriate circumstances in BC at 24.3% in 2019. Post-pandemic, in March 2023, BC was at a rate peak of 28.1%. By prioritizing this area of care, coupled with initiatives such as the Reimagining LTC program, BC is now demonstrating a modest decline to 27.7%.³ We have an opportunity to gain momentum once again and work together to reach our targets!



By using sustainable, person-centred care approaches we have an opportunity to improve the experience for residents and their families by ensuring that people living in LTC receive safe and high-quality care. This also means that care teams have the tools and resources to feel confident in supporting residents with their needs without using medications.

What is an Action Series?

An action series is a learning technique used to support improvements in specific areas of focus and provides teams the opportunity to work together on issues that are impacting them.⁴ The action series includes interactive learning sessions, action periods and coaching supports. It enables teams to focus on what matters to them and work towards a shared goal.

³ Canadian Institute for Health Information. Continuing Care Metadata. Last Accessed September 17, 2024.

⁴ Cauwelier P. Building high-performance teams through action learning. *Action Learning: Research and Practice*, 2019;16(1), 68–76. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767333.2019.1562693>

Program Structure

This Action Series centres on a toolkit, based around eight key elements that will help your LTC home identify strengths and opportunities focusing on the appropriate use of antipsychotics, and improve the quality of life for the residents, family and staff who live and work there. Your care home starts with completing a self-assessment, which will help you prioritize quality of life improvements to try and test, then collect data to understand if you have made an improvement and, finally, implement your ideas based on that information.





STEP 1: ASSESS

Review and rate how often each key element is used in practice in your LTC home by completing the self-assessment. The results of the self-assessment helps you prioritize actions towards the appropriate use of antipsychotics to manage behaviours. The goal is to identify improvements that your care home can then embed as sustainable practices in your day-to-day operations to reduce unnecessary medications in a safe manner, when appropriate, and to monitor your progress every six months.



STEP 2: MAKE CHANGES

Use the [AUA in LTC Improvement Guide](#) to prioritize one to two quality of life improvements. Choose only one or two areas so you know whether your changes have resulted in an improvement! Use the templates in the [AUA in LTC Improvement Guide](#) to **develop and document a monthly workplan** based on your priority area(s).



STEP 3: MEASURE CHANGES

Measurement is an essential part of improvement. Your data needs to accurately reflect what is happening at the care home level. Use the template provided in the [AUA in LTC Improvement Guide](#) to document your measurement plan that includes what data to monitor related to the appropriate use of antipsychotics. This helps your care home keep track of whether changes are leading to improvements over time.



STEP 4: RE-ASSESS AND REPEAT

Continue the improvement journey! Reassess every six months (minimum), work through the steps again and update your priorities and templates accordingly. The goal is to improve your rating for each key element until you reach a score of 6 for each one and your care home is able to maintain that score consistently with sustainable practices and processes embedded in day-to-day operations.

Expectations of LTC Homes

Each LTC home is required to identify a **team lead** who is the primary point of contact and is responsible for providing team updates and progress. Ideally the team lead is a clinical nurse leader or designate, with allocated time in their role to coordinate the implementation of an interdisciplinary team to support medication management for Behavioural Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD).



Complete the AUA in LTC Self-Assessment

The results of the self-assessment helps prioritize actions towards the appropriate use of antipsychotics to manage behaviours. It may be helpful to review the questions with your team before completing the online self-assessment. Use [this resource](#) to discuss the questions in advance.



Use the AUA in LTC Improvement Guide

We use the AUA in LTC Improvement Guide as the framework to support your team's improvement efforts towards the appropriate use of antipsychotics in your LTC home. The self-assessment results provides you with the information needed to complete the guide. The guide is pre-populated and includes templates and examples to develop your aim statement, life improvement ideas, measurement plan and monthly workplan.



Monthly Submission

Measurement is an essential part of improvement. Our data needs to accurately reflect what is happening at the care home level. To support your improvement journey, [a template is provided for data submissions](#) and will be due at the end of each month. Data submissions will include key outcome measures related to the number of residents who are administered antipsychotics, along with process measures to identify if the changes you try will lead to improved outcomes, and balancing measures to reflect potential unintended consequences (good or bad) that may occur by focusing on this area of care. A thorough measurement plan along with an easy-to-submit data tracking tool will be introduced during the Action Series.



Attend Coaching Calls

Each month there are scheduled group coaching calls where you connect with other care home teams to share learnings on what’s working well and strategies for overcoming barriers. One-to-one coaching supports are also available to care homes on an as-needed basis. After registration closes, coaching groups will be organized by respective health regions and topic areas.

Additional coaching supports are offered to teams who have also registered for the [Healthcare Excellence Canada Sparking Change in AUA Awards Program](#) to assist with award applications. Appendix A has additional information and timelines for the program.



Attend and Participate in Learning Webinars

Over the course of the action series, learning webinars are facilitated by clinical and quality improvement experts along with peers who have overcome similar challenges to those you may be facing. This is a fantastic opportunity for care homes to learn new or enhance existing strategies on the appropriate use of antipsychotics. Learning webinars are open for all members of your project team with the expectation that at least the team lead or designate will attend – webinars will be recorded and made available to view on the [HQBC website](#).

AUA In LTC Action Series Key Dates

Date & Time		Events
January 22, 2025 Q&A	1200-1300 1300-1330	Orientation Webinar Getting Started with the Toolkit
January 31, 2025	by end of day	Complete AUA in LTC Self-Assessment
February 19, 2025 Q&A	1200-1300 1300-1330	Learning Webinar 1 Priorities in Your AUA Work
March 7, 2025	by end of day	Complete First Draft of AUA in LTC Improvement Guide
March 19, 2025 Q&A	1200-1300 1300-1330	Learning Webinar 2 Interdisciplinary Team Approaches
May 21, 2025 Q&A	1200-1300 1300-1330	Learning Webinar 3 Deep Dive into the 8 Key Elements
September 17, 2025 Q&A	1200-1300 1300-1330	Learning Webinar 4 Celebrate and Share

Orientation Checklist

- **On January 22** – Attend Orientation Webinar: Getting Started with the Toolkit.
- **By January 24** – Complete the [readiness questionnaire](#) to help us support your participation in the Action Series.
- **By January 31** – Complete the [AUA Self-Assessment](#) that will guide your improvement journey during the Action Series.
- **By February 7** – Send team availability for coaching calls
Group coaching calls will take place each month through the Action Series. Please complete this [short form](#) to share your availability. Note: once we have formed coaching groups, we will send calendar invitations to you and your team.
- **By February 18** – Review [AUA in LTC Improvement Guide](#)
The guide is pre-populated and will be used throughout the Action Series. Please review before Learning Webinar 1: Priorities in Your AUA Work.

Meet the HQBC Team

Our team is passionate about improving the quality of life for residents, families and staff in our BC LTC homes. Read more about us by clicking on our names below!



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CONTACT US

Questions? You can contact our team throughout the Action Series at longtermcare@healthqualitybc.ca.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the members of our Partnership Alliance and Working Group who have provided strategic direction and valuable input to the AUA in LTC Toolkit and Action Series.

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Appendix A

HEALTHCARE EXCELLENCE CANADA SPARKING CHANGE IN AUA AWARDS PROGRAM

This is an awards-based quality improvement program supporting person-centred care in long-term care homes through the appropriate use of antipsychotics. The program offers support for LTC homes on their quality improvement journey from November 2024 to February 2026, through access to:

- Educational webinars
- Interactive coaching sessions
- Peer-to-peer learning and networking
- Curated tools and resources
- Opportunities to win monetary awards ranging from \$2,000-\$10,000

HQBC will provide coaching support for awards applications over the course of the 15-month program to BC homes. If you have not signed up to participate and you would like to do so now, email us at longtermcare@healthqualitybc.ca today to register. Space may still be available.

SPARKING CHANGE IN AUA AWARDS PROGRAM SCHEDULE



November 20, 2024 – Program Information Webinar and Kickstarter Award Launch

Join us for an informational webinar to learn all about the Sparking Change in the Appropriate Use of Antipsychotics Program (or watch the recording) and the Kickstarter Award launch. Teams who register by February 28, 2025, will be automatically entered into a draw for one of 55 awards of \$2,000.



January 28, 2025 – Improvement Plan Award Launch

Submit your Improvement Plan by March 21, 2025, to be considered for one of up to 30 awards of \$5,000.



March 26, 2025 – Person-Centred Care Award Launch

Submit by May 23, 2025, to be considered for the Person-Centred Care Award. Up to 30 prizes of \$5,000 will be awarded to successful teams by draw.



June 27, 2025 – Mid-Term Kickstarter Award

Teams who register before June 27, 2025, will be entered into a draw for one of 30 awards of \$2,000. If your site registered earlier and was not a winner in the first Kickstarter Award, you'll automatically be entered into this draw. The sooner you register, the more learning and award opportunities you will have!



May 28, 2025 – Progress Award Launch

Submit your progress reporting by August 22, 2025, to be considered for the Progress Award. Up to 30 prizes of \$5,000 will be awarded to successful teams.



August 26, 2025 – Workforce Safety Award Launch

Submit your workforce safety photo essay by October 17, 2025, to be entered into a draw for one of 30 prizes of \$5,000.



October 23, 2025 – Impact Award Launch

Submit your impact reporting by Jan 9, 2026, to be considered for the Impact Award where up to 25 prizes of \$10,000 will be awarded.



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