



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600*

November 6, 2014

**AL TSA: ALF #2014-017**  
**ANTIPSYCHOTIC DRUG USE BY VULNERABLE ADULTS WITH DEMENTIA IN ALF**

Dear Assisted Living Facility Administrator and/or Interested Parties:

Last June 30, 2014, Dr. Elinore F. McCance-Katz, M.D., Ph.D., Chief Medical Officer for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), issued a letter on behalf of SAMHSA warning about the use of antipsychotic prescription medication for vulnerable adults diagnosed with dementia. While this advisory was focused on residents living in nursing homes, the message is equally applicable to residents suffering from dementia in assisted living facilities (ALFs). The SAMHSA advisory describes the adverse events that may occur as a result of this practice, other conditions that may explain distressed or disruptive behaviors, and alternative approaches that may help to reduce or eliminate antipsychotic use.

The department encourages providers to fully align their ALFs to support the implementation of Quality Assurance programs and corresponding Care Plans in their facility. These programs and plans have been designed to minimize the use of and/or to otherwise ensure only appropriate antipsychotic drug use by vulnerable adults who have been diagnosed with dementia.

ALF staff should review the processes of care for those residents with behavioral and psychological symptoms related to dementia on antipsychotic medications.

You can review the June 30, 2014 SAMSHA letter on the internet at:  
<http://tools.store.samhsa.gov/SAMHSADearColleagueLetter.pdf>

Thank you for your continued commitment to ALF residents. If you have any questions, please contact your RCS Field Manager.

Sincerely,



Carl I. Walters II., Director  
Residential Care Services

*"Transforming Lives"*