

AVOIDING THE USE OF CHEMICAL RESTRAINTS IN LONG-TERM CARE *A NATIONAL CONSUMER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN*

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice), in partnership with AARP Foundation, has launched a new national Consumer Education Campaign, ***Avoiding the Use of Chemical Restraints in Long-Term Care***, to reduce the misuse of dangerous antipsychotic drugs in residents of long-term care facilities.

Currently in the U.S., nearly 179,000 residents of nursing homes, many with dementia, are given antipsychotic drugs, despite not having a clinical diagnosis warranting their use. Instead, antipsychotic drugs are used to sedate residents, control unwanted behaviors, or for staff convenience. In this population antipsychotic drugs can cause serious medical complications due to greatly increased risks of stroke, heart attack, falls, and even death. In 2005, the Food & Drug Administration issued a Black Box warning, its highest, for use of these drugs for elderly patients with dementia. These drugs are often administered without informed consent of the resident or their legal representative.

The new Consumer Education Campaign will raise public awareness about the dangers of antipsychotic drug use, especially for people with dementia; offer strategies and solutions for exercising individual rights and obtaining quality care; and equip consumers and advocates with the tools and knowledge to help them obtain and advocate for good care without use of these drugs. According to Lori Smetanka, Executive Director of the Consumer Voice, "Use of antipsychotic drugs to sedate or change behavior is a chemical restraint. Residents have the right to individualized care that meets their needs."

Join the Consumer Voice as we embark on this campaign to Avoid the Use of Chemical Restraints in Long-Term Care. Visit our website at www.theconsumervoice.org/stop-chemical-restraints. Follow us on social media @theconsumervoice (Facebook) or @ConsumerVoices (Twitter). Use #stopchemicalrestraints when talking about this issue on social media.

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