

Data Trends

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Pediatric Antidepressant Use Shows Substantial Decline Over Past Year

This News brief alerts you to the results of a recently released study by Medco Health Solutions, Inc., one of the nation's leading pharmacy benefit managers. The study found that the number of children taking antidepressants has decreased considerably from 2003 to 2004 since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) re-evaluated and revised antidepressant warning labeling.

The Medco analysis reveals an overall 10% decrease in the proportion of patients under age 18 on an antidepressant in the past year, a sharp contrast to the nearly 9% increase seen in 2003. It further shows a 16% decline in fourth quarter utilization over the same period in 2003, traditionally the time of the year when antidepressant use peaks. The steepest decline of more than 19% came in the third quarter of 2004 versus the same time period in 2003.

To find out more about Medco's outreach to pediatric physicians and the study, go to:
http://www.corporate-ir.net/ireye/ir_site.zhtml?ticker=MHS&script=410&layout=-6&item_id=668973

Data Trends are produced by the Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, Tampa. Data Trends are funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There are two Data Trends products: 1) Summaries (ISSN# 1537-0399), which detail recent, published articles on systems of care for children with emotional and behavioral disabilities and their families, and; 2) News briefs (ISSN# 1537-0402), which highlight related items or events of interest to the field.



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Medco Health Solutions, Inc. (ticker: MHS, exchange: New York Stock Exchange) News Release - 2/1/2005

Pediatric Antidepressant Use Shows Substantial Decline Over Past Year**Physician and Parent Awareness of Antidepressant Risks for Children Cuts Patient Numbers by More Than 10% in 2004**

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J., Feb. 1 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The number of children taking antidepressants has decreased considerably from 2003 to 2004 since the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) re-evaluated and revised antidepressant warning labeling, according to data released today by Medco Health Solutions, Inc., (NYSE: MHS), one of the nation's leading pharmacy benefit managers.

The Medco analysis reveals an overall 10 percent decrease in the proportion of patients under age 18 on an antidepressant in the past year, a sharp contrast to the nearly 9 percent increase seen in 2003. It further shows a 16 percent decline in fourth quarter utilization over the same period in 2003, traditionally the time of the year when antidepressant use peaks. The steepest decline of more than 19 percent came in the third quarter of 2004 versus the same time period in 2003.

The FDA first proposed the black box warning, the FDA's strongest alert, in October 2004 after analysis of available data showed an increase in the risk of suicidal tendency ("suicidality") among children being treated with certain antidepressants. The label change was given final approval on Jan. 12, 2005, with the warning required to appear on antidepressant labels within a month of that date.

"There has been a significant shift away from prescribing antidepressants for children since the FDA first proposed strengthening warnings labels for these medications," said Dr. Robert Epstein, Medco's chief medical officer. "The quick response from the medical community proves that the healthcare safety net - which includes Medco's efforts to alert physicians and patients of the potential risks - is working as it should."

Last year, following an FDA Advisory Committee meeting and the subsequent FDA proposal for label changes, Medco implemented a broad-reaching integrated communication effort to contact patients, pharmacists and physicians. Medco immediately posted product alerts on medco.com, the company's online pharmacy. As quickly as possible, all antidepressant prescriptions filled through Medco's mail service pharmacies included updated patient product information. The company also provided its 3,500 customer services representatives with up- to-date product information to address patient and caregiver questions related to use of antidepressants in pediatric patients.

To reach physicians and pharmacists, Medco continued the use of its detailed pediatric drug utilization alerts related specifically to antidepressants. Medco expanded its safety alert rules in its RationalMed(R) patient safety system, which identifies patients at risk for adverse drug events which could lead to hospitalization. Medco also distributed practice summaries to physicians identifying the patients under the age of 18 within their practice on antidepressants to help physicians evaluate any necessary changes in therapy.

The new FDA ruling mandates that antidepressants bear a black box warning regarding the potential risk of pediatric suicidality. In addition, the black box warning states the following:

- Physicians, patients or their caregivers must balance the clinical risks and benefits of the drugs
- The drug may not be FDA approved for use in pediatric patients
- Families and caregivers need to be aware of the importance of frequent physician visits and monitoring for hazardous side effects, particularly during the first few months of therapy.

Overall Use of Behavioral Medicines on the Rise

Medco has been conducting analyses on the pediatric population for several years to elevate the broader public discussion of issues surrounding child- related pharmaceutical health care, and released data in May 2004 that revealed a significant rise in the overall use of medications to treat a variety of behavioral conditions in the 19 and under age category. Among the major findings of that analysis:

- Prescription drug spending for behavioral conditions rose 77 percent between 2000 and 2003 due to both increased costs and increased use of these medications.
- In 2003, spending on behavioral medications to treat children overtook both the antibiotic and asthma categories, which are traditionally high-use categories in pediatric medicine.
- The number of children on behavioral medications had jumped more than 20 percent between 2000 and 2003, outpaced only by the increase of children on drugs to treat gastrointestinal conditions, which

increased by nearly 28 percent.

- Among the largest increases were medications primarily used to treat attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) -- where spending increased by 183 percent for children overall, and by 369 percent increase for children under age 5. Utilization in preschoolers was up 49 percent from 2000 to 2003.
- Spending on antidepressants for children grew 25 percent, while use of these drugs rose 27 percent between 2000 and 2003.

About Medco

Medco Health Solutions, Inc., a leading pharmacy benefit manager with the nation's largest mail order pharmacy operations, assists its customers to moderate the cost and enhance the quality of prescription drug benefits provided to members nationwide. Its customers include private- and public- sector employers and healthcare organizations. Medco is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol MHS. On the Net: <http://www.medco.com>.

This press release contains "forward-looking statements" as that term is defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements involve risks and uncertainties that may cause results to differ materially from those set forth in the statements. No forward-looking statement can be guaranteed, and actual results may differ materially from those projected. We undertake no obligation to publicly update any forward- looking statement, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements in this presentation should be evaluated together with the risks and uncertainties that affect our business, particularly those mentioned in the Risk Factors section of the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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