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First Statewide Recommendation on Potentially Inappropriate Medications in the Elderly to be Issued Thursday

The New Mexico Prescription Improvement Coalition (NMPIC) is issuing a clinical recommendation titled, "Medications to be Used with Caution in the Elderly," on Thursday, August 27, 2009, at 12:15 p.m., in conjunction with the 2009 New Mexico Conference on Aging at Sandia Resort and Casino (Hummingbird A). Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, Alfredo Vigil, MD, will open the program as special guest.

The recommendation is jointly endorsed by many health care organizations serving the state of New Mexico, and, as of August 20, included Amerigroup, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico, Evercare, Express Scripts, Humana, Lovelace Health Plan, Molina Health Care of New Mexico, New Mexico Association for Home and Hospice Care, New Mexico Health Care Association, New Mexico Medical Review Association, New Mexico Osteopathic Medical Association, New Mexico Pharmacists Association, New Mexico Prescription Improvement Coalition, New Mexico Society of Health-System Pharmacists, New Mexico VA Health Care System, Presbyterian Health Plan, UnitedHealthcare – New Mexico, and the University of New Mexico College of Pharmacy. More organizations are expected to follow suit over the next several weeks.

The recommendation was developed by a consensus panel of health care providers, including pharmacists, geriatric providers and managed care specialists from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico, Evercare/United Healthcare – New Mexico, Express Scripts, Lovelace Health Plan, NMMRA, New Mexico Department of Health, New Mexico Veterans HealthCare System, Presbyterian Health Plan, University of New Mexico College of Pharmacy, University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. The group evaluated a number of nationally published lists of potentially inappropriate medications and criteria to develop the statewide recommendation, which includes alternative suggestions.

According to the national Institute of Medicine, 7,000 Americans die each year from medication errors, more than workplace injury. Medicare data for New Mexico show that in 2007-08 every fifth medication prescribed to Medicare beneficiaries is potentially inappropriate and every 11th medication prescribed is a drug to be avoided in the elderly (Medicare Part D claims 10/01/2007-03/31/08).

"Use of this recommendation will improve patient safety throughout the state," says William Orr, MD, medical director for Evercare/United and member of the consensus panel. "Additionally, efficiency of health care should see an increase and adverse drug events a reduction in the mature population."

For more information on the recommendation or NMPIC, contact Galina Priloutsкая, PhD, MBA, CHCA, manager for drug safety at the New Mexico Medical Review Association, at gpriloutsкая@nmmra.org.

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This material was prepared by the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA), the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for New Mexico, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 9SOW-NM-PD-09-19