



May 16, 2007

Dear Family Members and Healthcare Providers,

The New York State Office of Mental Health provides the attached advisory on the treatment of children and adolescents with second generation (SGA) (or novel or atypical) antipsychotic medications. This comes at a time where there has been considerable public attention to this matter, and we hope this advisory is useful to families and providers alike.

The treatment of mental disorders in children and adolescents begins with a careful assessment of the psychiatric, medical and psychosocial aspects of the child and family. The treatment itself may involve different interventions based on the assessment and risks and benefits; interventions include cognitive and behavioral treatments, family education and support, and medication. The use of medication in children should never be the only intervention, and should not substitute for needed other services. When medication is used it must be monitored regularly for side effects and evaluated for effectiveness. If the medication has not met treatment goals after a reasonable amount of time it should be discontinued and other options explored.

The attached advisory is based on a review of current guidelines and literature regarding SGA use in children and adolescents and is meant to support careful and thorough clinical assessment, treatment planning and ongoing monitoring of care.

Thank you,

Lewis A. Opler, M.D., Ph.D

David Woodlock