

# Antipsychotic drugmakers target marketing dollars at DC Medicaid psychiatrists

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The D.C. Department of Health (DOH) has released a study by George Washington University School of Public Health & Health Services (SPHHS) indicating the high levels of marketing by antipsychotic drug manufacturers to Medicaid psychiatrists in the District of Columbia.

Antipsychotics are one of the top-selling drug classes; In 2010, top antipsychotic manufacturers spent more than \$25 million on marketing in Washington DC. Among 26 psychiatrists receiving at least \$1000 from top antipsychotic manufacturers in 2010, 7 (27%) were [Medicaid](#) providers. Medicaid [psychiatrists](#), however, received a disproportionate, share of industry largesse, receiving two-thirds (66%) of gifts and payments. In 2008 (the most recent data available), antipsychotic use by Medicaid recipients was especially high in the nation's capitol, with approximately 1 in 10 recipients receiving a prescription – a rate five times higher than the total national population.

A large proportion of Medicaid recipients are children under the age of 18. Antipsychotics can cause sedation, weight gain, diabetes, and other adverse effects. Previous studies have shown a high rate of inappropriate off-label use (for conditions the FDA has not approved). Some adverse events may be more likely to occur in children and young adults.

Lead researcher Susan Wood, PhD, Associate Professor at SPHHS, said, "Pharmaceutical marketing affects which drugs are prescribed. Prescribing decisions can have a profound effect on both state coffers and population health."

"Antipsychotics are clearly being used in patients who are not psychotic," said Adriane Fugh-Berman, MD, collaborator on the report and Associate Professor of Pharmacology and Physiology at Georgetown University Medical Center.

**More information:** Access to the report is available on DOH's web site, [doh.dc.gov/node/158762](https://doh.dc.gov/node/158762)

Provided by George Washington University

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