



FROM THE SOCIETY

IMPROVING WISELY PROJECT ON RISKY PRESCRIBING IN OLDER ADULTS

Millions of older adults are taking too many risky medications. To address this major public health problem, the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) is participating in a project of the national Improving Wisely quality collaborative focusing on reducing high-risk prescribing in older adults. The project is led by a team based at the Johns Hopkins University with an external advisory group, the Improving Wisely Physician Engagement Council for General Internal Medicine, which includes 6 SGIM members—Shahla Baharlou, Seki Balogun, Jennifer Carnahan, Sascha Dublin, Amy Linsky, and Michael Steinman.

The team is using publicly available Medicare claims data to give personalized feedback to primary care physicians who are two standard deviations above the mean in: mean number of medications per older patient; proportion of older patients receiving at least one medication considered high-risk in older patients; pro-

portion of older patients using multiple central nervous system-active medications; proportion of older patients using benzodiazepine sedative hypnotics; or proportion of older patients concurrently using an opioid and benzodiazepine.

The team sent letters to physicians identified as outliers. Each letter included a report showing how the physician's prescribing practice compares to a benchmark. Neither SGIM nor the Physician Engagement Council have access to individual data. The results are not legally discoverable and have no implications for board certification or credentialing. The letters offer educational resources in the spirit of using peer-based collaboration to support collective improvement. The analysis will be repeated to determine whether prescribing practices change.

If you have questions, contact Dr. Tina Fahim at admin@improvingwisely.org.

SGIM