Long-Acting Antipsychotic Medicines* (LAAMs)

Why LAAMs?
Long-acting antipsychotic medications (LAAMs) offered through the intramuscular or subcutaneous injection route provide slow release of antipsychotic medications to the bloodstream. LAAMs can last anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 months with just one dose.

What are the benefits of LAAMs?
- Helps individuals stay on track with a medication plan.
- Steady release of the medication may reduce side effects.
- Improves the quality of life for those taking the injection.
- Reduces the risk of relapse.
- Reduced hospitalizations.
- Reduces all-cause mortality.

Keys to Using LAAMs
- Understand your personal clinical bias.
- Planning administration (who gives injection, how to store the medication, billing for the injection and administration).
- Offer as an option to all, especially the young adult population.
- Identify members to talk with about using LAAMs.
- Obtain training and resource information.
  - LAAM educational sessions (Improving Outcomes in Psychotic Disorders - LAIAs evidence, indications, practical applications)
  - SMI Advisor (CME credit)
    - Long-Acting Injectable Center of Excellence
    - Strategies for Success: Using Long-Acting Injectable Medications
    - Clinician’s Guide to Preparing and Administering Long-Acting Injectable Antipsychotics

Barriers to LAAM Use
- Lack of knowledge and experience.
- Limited infrastructure to administer injections.
- Overcoming perceived patient fears of injections.
- Historical perception of stigma associated with LAAMs.
- Lack of insurance coverage. (Note: while NC Medicaid covers all LAAMs, even the uninsured can access most of the LAAMs via patient assistance programs.)

* The term LAAM is preferred to LAI (long acting injectable) in order to focus on the long-acting aspect of these medications and not on the injection aspect. The injection aspect is addressed after the potential benefits of long-acting medicine are relayed to the patient. This language can help patients make better informed decisions about this treatment option.