



# MEDIA RELEASE

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BUREAU OF TENNCARE

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## **TENNCARE PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH ADHD AND DEPRESSION**

### **EAST TENNESSEE REGION THE TARGET FOR NEW PILOT PROGRAM**

Nashville, Tenn.—The TennCare Bureau today announced a new initiative designed to target inappropriate treatment of depression and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children on TennCare. The pilot program includes partnerships between TennCare, the Governor's office of Children's Care Coordination, Magellan Behavioral Health and the University of Tennessee School of Pharmacy.

The new program will be piloted in the East Tennessee region over an eight month period beginning January 1, 2006.

"TennCare has seen dramatic increases in potentially harmful levels of utilization, with unproven therapies, to treat children living with depression or ADHD in our program," said J.D. Hickey, Deputy Commissioner for the TennCare Bureau. "The goal is to improve the lives and quality of care for children with depression and ADHD enrolled in TennCare by educating clinicians about best-practice guidelines to improve the appropriate treatment of children with these behavioral conditions."

Researchers from Vanderbilt recently published a study in the [Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine](#) using TennCare adolescents as the subject. The results showed new users of antipsychotics nearly doubled from 1996 to 2001 with a substantial increase in use for ADHD and similar conduct disorders.

"With our partners, we believe we can make a positive impact on the behavioral health of these children by reducing unnecessary side effects through the appropriate treatment of ADHD and depression," said Hickey.

With a care management approach, the pilot program will work to affect prescribing habits of behavioral health clinicians and provide education to care givers with children affected by depression or ADHD.

"This is essentially a targeted effort to get physicians to use best practices when treating children with ADHD and depression," said Tom Catron, Director of the Governor's Office of Children's Care Coordination. "The most beneficial outcome would be to positively effect physician prescribing patterns and ultimately improve the behavioral health of children in TennCare."

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Magellan Behavioral Health has partnered with the TennCare Bureau to deliver the behavioral health pharmacy program at no cost to the state for eight months. Magellen will target clinicians that fall outside of the best-practice guidelines using retrospective drug utilization review, and will educate providers about the evidence-based approaches to treatment. In addition, the pilot will also provide caregiver information and feedback, whether that caregiver is a parent, guardian or the child.

TennCare will fund a \$25,000 joint effort with The University of Tennessee Pharmacy School to measure the success and outcomes of the pilot project. The metric and analysis approach will include a coordinated look at prescription claims, medical claims and other non-clinical measurements to determine if intervention affected prescribing patterns in physicians and improved social outcomes for targeted children.

Once the pilot project concludes, TennCare will determine if the analysis results warrant expansion of the pediatric behavioral health initiative.

TennCare is Tennessee's expanded Medicaid program, providing health insurance coverage to 1.2 million Tennesseans including 640,000 children.

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