

Despite being available for over 45 years, long-acting injectable antipsychotics (LAIs) remain an underutilized treatment option for people with serious and persistent mental illness. These injectable medications can help patients better manage their condition and improve long-term outcomes by preventing relapses and enhancing medication adherence.

- ➔ [American Psychiatric Association \(APA\) Practice Guideline for the Treatment of Patients with Schizophrenia \(2020\)](#)

LAIs are used primarily for individuals who struggle with adherence to antipsychotic medications. LAIs have been demonstrated through research to help:

- ➔ Improve adherence
- ➔ Reduce the occurrence and frequency of symptom relapse
- ➔ Reduce rehospitalization
- ➔ Improve treatment outcomes for this population

### Transitioning to an LAI

While some patients start right away on an LAI, others start treatment on oral medications and may prefer using an injectable medication so that they do not have the burden of taking daily medications. Below are some tips to keep in mind when considering transitioning a patient to an LAI or initiating treatment with an LAI.

- ➔ Transition with oral medications to make sure the patient can tolerate it
- ➔ Start at lower doses and slowly increase the dose as tolerated
- ➔ Maintain necessary oral medications for extra-pyramidal symptoms (EPS)
- ➔ Attempt to taper anti-EPS medications after starting the LAI
- ➔ Consider checking plasma levels (when indicated) to make sure they are within the therapeutic range

### FDA-Approved LAI Medications and Dosing Information

Generation	Drug	Dosing Interval	Comments
<b>First Generation</b>	Fluphenazine decanoate	Every 2-6 weeks	Dosing interval based on patient response
	Haldol decanoate	Every 4 weeks	Initiate at 10-20 times daily oral dose
<b>Second Generation</b>	Abilify Maintena	Every 4 weeks	Requires two weeks of overlap with an oral antipsychotic
	Abilify Asimtufii	Every 8 weeks	Patients can be transitioned from oral antipsychotics or Abilify Maintena
	Aristada	Every 4, 6, or 8 weeks	Initiate Aristada with Aristada Initio 675mg and oral aripiprazole 30mg or three weeks of oral aripiprazole overlap
	Invega Sustenna	Every 4 weeks	Initiate with Invega Sustenna 234mg followed by Invega Sustenna 156mg one week later
	Invega Trinza	Every 3 months	Establish adequate treatment with Invega Sustenna for at least four months prior to transitioning

Generation	Drug	Dosing Interval	Comments
Second Generation (con'd)	Invega Hafyera	Every 6 months	Establish adequate treatment with Invega Sustenna for at least four months or Invega Trinza for at least one three-month cycle before transitioning
	Perseris	Every 4 weeks	Oral supplementation not required
	Risperdal Consta	Every 2 weeks	Requires three weeks of overlap with an oral antipsychotic
	Uzedy	Every 4 or 8 weeks	Oral supplementation not required
	Zyprexa Relprevv	Every 2 or 4 weeks	Requires monitoring for at least three hours post-injection

**Addressing Patient Barriers**

Patients with behavioral or mental health conditions face additional barriers to self-managing their conditions. Below are some considerations to keep in mind when dealing with this patient population.

- ➔ Discuss treatment plans with patient’s family members or others involved in their care
- ➔ Ensure that the patient has a plan on how they will get to the office for their injections
  - » Offering transportation or reminder cards and involving family in the care can help prevent missed appointments
- ➔ Avoid use of stigmatizing language
- ➔ Educate patients to prevent a negative perception of long-acting medications
- ➔ Employ a trauma-informed approach where you engage the patient in conversations and highlight that they are able to express their choices and preferences
- ➔ [National Council for Mental Wellbeing Guide to Long-Acting Medications](#)

**Patient Considerations**

While there are many advantages to using LAIs, there are some factors to consider that may be unfavorable for some patients:

- ➔ Slow dose titration and longer time to achieve steady state levels
- ➔ Delayed relief of distressing or severe psychiatric side effects
- ➔ Pain at injection site, leakage into surrounding tissue, and potential for irritation and lesions
- ➔ Burden of needing frequent, reliable travel to outpatient clinics to receive injections
- ➔ Possible perception of stigma

For reference, please read [Long-Acting Injectable Antipsychotics: A Practical Guide for Prescribers](#).

**Transitions of Care**

LAIs may be appropriate for patients who are transitioning between settings, such as patients being discharged from an inpatient stay, where there may be concerns for nonadherence.

If your inpatient practice does not have a pharmacy that can dispense LAIs, the following LAIs have a hospital inpatient free trial programs:

- ➔ [Abilify Maintena](#) | 1-888-596-2745
- ➔ [Aristada](#) | 1-844-341-6431
- ➔ [Invega Sustenna](#) | 1-800-240-5746
- ➔ [Perseris](#) | 1-844-871-8837
- ➔ [Uzedy](#) | 1-833-988-2531

There are concerns that patients who are discharged with an LAI may not follow up with an outpatient provider. However, there is research to suggest that patients initiated on an LAI during their inpatient stay are more likely to have an outpatient follow-up after discharge compared to their peers initiated on an oral antipsychotic.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, providing an LAI prescription with refills may be beneficial for patients who have difficulty getting follow-up care.

### Clinical Prior Authorization

Starting on January 1, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services instituted a single statewide [Preferred Drug List \(PDL\)](#). Almost all LAI antipsychotics are preferred on the PDL, except for the Uzedy (risperidone) (*up to date as of 1/8/24*).

- ➔ [PA DHS Fee-for-Service Pharmacy Prior Authorization General Requirements and Procedures](#)  
(contains details about when a clinical prior authorization is necessary)

### Care Coordination with Pharmaceutical Companies

Certain pharmaceutical companies offer care coordination services.

Pharmaceutical Company Care Coordination	Contact Number
<a href="#">Abilify Maintena Patient Assistance</a>	1-855-727-6274
<a href="#">Abilify Asimtufii Patient Assistance</a>	1-855-727-6274
<a href="#">Aristada Patient Assistance</a>	1-866-274-7823
<a href="#">Invega Sustenna Patient Assistance</a>	1-877-227-3728
<a href="#">Invega Trinza Patient Assistance</a>	1-877-227-3728
<a href="#">Invega Hafvera Patient Assistance</a>	1-877-227-3728
<a href="#">Perseris Patient Assistance</a>	1-877-467-7778
<a href="#">Risperdal Consta Patient Assistance</a>	1-877-227-3728
<a href="#">Uzedy Patient Assistance</a>	1-800-887-8100

<sup>1</sup> Patel C, Pilon D, Morrison L, Holiday C, Lafeuille MH, Lefebvre P, Benson C. Continuity of care among patients newly initiated on second-generation oral or long-acting injectable antipsychotics during a schizophrenia-related inpatient stay. *Curr Med Res Opin.* 2023 Aug;39(8):1157-1166.

### Pharmacies that Provide LAI Services

The table below has information about pharmacies in the area that offer LAI services, such as dispensing and/or administration. Each pharmacy has different services available, but Altruix – Trevoze Specialty Pharmacy, Shop and Carry Pharmacy, Sunray Specialty Pharmacy, and select ACME pharmacies offer the most services.

Pharmacy	Contact	Dispenses LAIs	Delivers to Provider Offices	Administers Onsite
<b><u>ACME Pharmacies</u></b> Multiple locations (see information below)	See information below	✓	✓	✓
<b><u>Altruix – Trevoze Specialty Pharmacy</u></b> 3800 Horizon Blvd Suite #103 Trevoze, PA 19053	P: 800-927-6703 F: 215-357-2129	✓	✓	✓
<b><u>CVS Specialty (Center City)</u></b> 1117 Walnut St Philadelphia, PA 19107	P: 215-627-2143 F: 215-627-8943	✓	✓	
<b><u>Elwyn Pharmacy</u></b> 194 S New Middletown Rd Media, PA 19063	P: 610-566-2226 F: 610-566-0521	✓		
<b><u>Jefferson Specialty Pharmacy</u></b> 3500 Horizon Dr King of Prussia, PA 19406	P: 844-469-7542 F: 215-955-8182	✓	✓	
<b><u>Shop and Carry Pharmacy (North Philadelphia)</u></b> 1301 Lindley Ave Philadelphia, PA 19141	P: 267-297-5030 F: 267-297-5783	✓	✓	✓
<b><u>Sunray Specialty Pharmacy (West Philadelphia)</u></b> 152 S 52nd St, Suite 201 Philadelphia, PA 19139	P: 215-471-4000 F: 215-471-4001	✓	✓	✓
<b><u>Walgreens Specialty – Community Pharmacy (Center City)</u></b> 1227 Locust Street Philadelphia, PA 19107	P: 215-772-2772 F: 215-772-2798	✓	✓	

### Sunray Specialty Pharmacy

Sunray Specialty Pharmacy coordinates with other independent pharmacies within their network. The specialty store can dispense LAIs and deliver them to the pharmacy where the pharmacist will administer the injectable to the patient. For patients who may need it, Sunray also offers car share services to get the patient to and from their preferred pharmacy location. In addition to the specialty location in West Philadelphia, the following pharmacies are able to administer LAIs:

**Dake's Drug Store (West Philadelphia)**  
201 City Ave, Merion, PA 19066  
610-667-1316

**Sunray Drugs – C Street (Northeast Philadelphia)**  
424 E Allegheny Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19134  
215-423-8500

**Sunray Drugs – Progress Plaza (North Philadelphia)**  
 1501 N Broad St, Philadelphia, PA 19122  
 215-235-4000

**Sunray Drugs – K&A (Northeast Philadelphia)**  
 825 E Allegheny Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19134  
 215-425-7700

**Friendly Pharmacy (Northeast Philadelphia)**  
 2258 N Front St, Philadelphia, PA 19133  
 215-425-5230

**Nice Pharmacy (Northeast Philadelphia)**  
 110 E Allegheny Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19134  
 215-425-0100

**Port Richmond Pharmacy (Northeast Philadelphia)**  
 2512 E Clearfield St, Philadelphia, PA 19134  
 215-426-5099

### ACME Pharmacies

ACME pharmacies can also administer LAIs intramuscularly or subcutaneously at any of their pharmacy locations. The provider can send a prescription to one of the ACME locations with instructions on either administering the injectable to the patient at the pharmacy or delivering to the medical office. If the injection is to be administered at the pharmacy, the pharmacy will contact the patient to schedule an appointment. The provider is notified of any missed/rescheduled appointments. The provider is also sent a notification after the patient receives their injection. The ACME pharmacy locations in the Philadelphia area are:

**Northwest Philadelphia**  
 7010 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19119\*  
 215-247-4995

**Northeast Philadelphia**  
 8200 Roosevelt Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19152  
 215-338-4967

**Northeast Philadelphia**  
 920 Red Lion Rd, Philadelphia, PA 19115  
 215- 676-6279

**Northeast Philadelphia**  
 6601 Roosevelt Blvd, Philadelphia, PA 19149\*  
 215-338-6601

**Northeast Philadelphia**  
 180 West Girard Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19123  
 215-574-1221

**Northwest Philadelphia**  
 5927-59 Ridge Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19128\*  
 215-487-3419

**Northeast Philadelphia**  
 2101-41 Cottman Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19149\*  
 215-728-1015

**Northwest Philadelphia**  
 7700 Crittenden St, Philadelphia, PA 19118  
 215-248-6495

**South Philadelphia**  
 1400 E Passyunk Ave, Philadelphia PA 19147  
 215-551-3321

**Southwest Philadelphia**  
 1901 Johnston St, Philadelphia, PA 19145\*  
 215-336-5553

**Northeast Philadelphia**  
 6640 Oxford Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19111\*  
 215-725-9319

*\* These ACME locations have a private consultation room. Due to the site of administration and/or manufacturer requirements, Abilify Asimtufigi, Invega Hafyera, and most doses of Aristada must be administered in an ACME location with a consultation room.*

If you are a pharmacy within the Philadelphia area that offers LAI services and is not listed above, please contact our pharmacy team at [cbh.pharmacyinitiatives@phila.gov](mailto:cbh.pharmacyinitiatives@phila.gov).