

## Supplemental materials for

Maust DT, Takamine L, Wiechers IR, et al. Strategies associated with reducing benzodiazepine prescribing to older adults: a mixed methods study. *Ann Fam Med*. 2022;20(4):328-335.

### Supplemental Appendix

#### Facility Leader Interview Guide

##### **Introduction**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. [If necessary, introduce other interviewer or note taker] Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to speak with us. As a quick reminder about why we're here, we would like to learn about how your facility tried to reduce benzodiazepine prescribing for older Veterans as part of the Psychotropic Drug Safety Initiative (PDSI). The interview should last under an hour.

##### **Confidentiality**

I'm going to take a little time to read our procedures to protect the confidentiality of this interview. We plan to record it, but you can ask that the voice recorder be turned off, decline to answer any interview questions, or stop the interview at any time.

[Read the phone consent script]

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

I'm turning on the recorder now.

##### **Section 1: Background Information**

We would like to start with some background information. PDSI Phase 2 started in fall of 2016 and ran through the summer of 2017.

- Could you please describe for us your role at your facility at that time?
  - How long had you been in that position?
- Are you still in the same position?
  - If not, what are you currently doing?

##### ***For the PDSI champion only:***

We understand that you were the Phase 2 PDSI champion—the phase focused on prescribing to older Veterans—for your facility.

- How did that come about?
- Phase 2 was specifically focused on older Veterans—do you have any particular background, expertise, or interest in treating older adults?
- Could you list your primary responsibilities in the champion role?
- Were these added on top of your other job responsibilities or were other activities specifically reduced to free up time?

## **Section 2: Big Picture PDSI Planning**

We understand that your facility focused specifically on reducing benzodiazepine prescribing to older Veterans as part of PDSI Phase 2. We're going to first ask you questions about planning your strategies to reduce benzo prescribing, then about carrying out those strategies.

### ***Planning:***

First, before we get to the specific strategies you used, I wanted to ask you about the planning process.

- Who was involved in planning? [probe to see the extent of input—was it centralized, was broader input solicited, were administrators involved, did it cross service lines (e.g., mental health and primary care)]
- How did you go about deciding what to do?
- Did you base strategies on other studies or prior experience with other QI (quality improvement) initiatives?

## **Section 3: Phase 2 specifics**

Now, could you describe the specific things your facility did to try to reduce benzo prescribing as part of PDSI Phase 2?

- How were those plans and goals communicated within your facility to providers and administration?

### ***Personnel issues***

- Who was involved in carrying out the strategy? [Probe for the sorts of roles within the organization did they have; e.g., PCP, mental health; specific functions; pharmacists, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc.]
  - Did the plan include primary care providers?
- How were they selected?
  - Were the people involved in PDSI perceived as facility leaders, and by whom?
- Were the various individuals involved meant to work as a team? Did they see themselves as a team? Did they work/communicate well together?
- What was turnover like in the team of employees involved in this strategy?
- To what extent were administrators involved in the strategy? Did they see PDSI as a priority?

### ***Clinicians/care delivery***

- How would you describe the attitude in your facility toward benzo prescribing prior to the PDSI initiative?
  - Was it perceived as a problem that needed to be addressed?
  - Did attitudes change?
  - *If the plan included primary care:* Was the attitude different among primary care providers compared to mental health?
- How did facility clinicians and staff react to PDSI strategies? [E.g., were they on board right away, did they complain, did they need further explanation?]
  - What kind of feedback did they give? How did you hear about it?
  - *If the plan included primary care:* Was feedback different from primary care providers compared to mental health?
- How did patients react to PDSI strategies?
  - How were their concerns addressed?
  - Are you aware of any patients leaving the VA because of disagreement related to their BZD?
- To what extent were your strategies provider facing versus patient facing?

- Did clinicians have support to help implement the strategies? E.g., additional nursing or pharmacist support to help with the taper process? Additional access to psychotherapy appointments?
  - Did those involved know how to access and use the resources?
  - If you provided educational materials, did you develop your own or use those from Academic Detailing?
- If patients agreed to a taper, how was the taper process carried out?
  - What resources were available to help patients?
  - What resources were available to help providers?
- Did you have any means of tracking progress in reducing benzo prescribing? If so, could you describe them?
  - Do you know if individual providers made use of the PDSI dashboard?
- Was PDSI part of performance measures for providers?

#### ***Other Initiatives***

- At the time that your facility was focused on benzodiazepine prescribing for PDSI, did the facility have other ongoing initiatives focused on improving psychotropic or opioid prescribing?
  - If your facility was addressing BZD-opioid co-prescribing, was one medication always addressed first or was it a case-by-case approach?
- To what extent did these other initiatives affect efforts to improve benzodiazepine prescribing?

#### ***Other VA facilities***

- Were you aware of the performance of other facilities on this specific PDSI measure (benzodiazepine prescribing to Veterans  $\geq 75$ ) within your VISN and nationally?
- Did you communicate this information to providers?
- Did administrators have access to this information? Did they act on it?
- Did knowing how your facility was doing relative to others affect you or other staff?

#### ***Closing Questions***

- Was your facility's strategy to address benzo prescribing modified over time?
  - If so, how and why?
- Overall, what was most challenging about enacting your strategy?
- Overall, what do you think was most effective about your strategy?
  - Least effective?
- Are there other issues that we have not already addressed that you think has been important for your facility's approach?
- If you were advising another facility that wanted to implement a program to reduce benzodiazepine prescribing to older Veterans, what would you tell them?

#### **Section 4: Wrap up**

Thank you so much for taking the time to help us in this research. Just to let you know, we will be completing phone interviews over the next several months. Depending on what we learn from these interviews, we will be making selections for a site visit, so you may be hearing from us again. Thank you again for your time.