

## Vivage Beecan Megace Policy

Megace is not allowed as an option for weight gain for elderly LTC residents in this facility without the explicit approval of the Performance Improvement Committee. This decision is based upon multiple factors, including:

1. **Polypharmacy:** is already a significant issue in this population. Not adding ineffective or harmful agents is important.
2. **FDA:** Megace is *only* approved for AIDS and a limited number of cancers, **not** for use in seniors for weight gain. Megace may be associated with higher mortality even when used in the populations for which it *has* been approved.
3. **Adverse Effects:** Megace acts as a partial steroid agonist and may lead to adrenal suppression. In men, it decreases testosterone levels, resulting in loss of lean body mass, the exact opposite of what is intended when trying to get seniors to gain weight. Studies have shown that any weight gained is exclusively fatty weight. This may be detrimental in and of itself as seniors with cardiopulmonary disease must increase oxygen demands to carry around more fat, but have not added muscle mass to do it. As a progesterone-like hormone, it is also been associated with an increased risk of deep venous thrombosis and perhaps other thrombotic events (e.g., MI, CVA).
4. **Literature:** **There is no evidence to support efficacy.** Attached articles show just the opposite. A study of LTC residents from the *American Journal of Geriatric Pharmacotherapy* showed that it leads to an increase in mortality (while not leading to an increase in weight compared to placebo). It was a well-designed study for nursing home patients and concluded that “**Megace treatment of elderly nursing home residents with significant weight loss was associated with a significant increase in all-cause mortality without a significant increase in weight.**” An article from JAGS (attached) showed that Megace interfered with muscle strength and functional performance gains in comparison to patients not on this agent.

Dronabinol (Marinol) is also **not** approved for weight gain in seniors, but there is limited evidence it may be of benefit in some. It may be used for a few months if:

- It is shown to lead to stabilization or an increase in weight accompanied by an improvement in measurable proteins (e.g., Albumin and/or Prealbumin);
- It does not lead to attributable adverse reactions such as hallucinations, seizures, depression, paranoia, dizziness, somnolence, abdominal pain, nausea/vomiting, tachycardia, anxiety, orthostasis; and
- There is an acceptable Risk / Benefit statement on the chart signed by both the provider and the responsible party.