

MISSD Spotlights Suicide Prevention, Akathisia, and Medication Risks

Akathisia, a Medication-Induced Disorder, Can Cause Self-Harm, Violence, and Suicide

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, May 22, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Medication-Induced Suicide Prevention and Education Foundation in Memory of Stewart Dolin (MISSD) is calling for more honest, open dialogue about the role of adverse drug effects (ADEs) in mental health crises and preventable deaths.

"May is Mental Health Awareness Month, yet few—if any—suicide prevention and mental health nonprofits ever mention that medications can cause psychiatric symptoms and suicide," said MISSD founder Wendy Dolin. "ADEs are currently the third leading cause of death, but due to underreporting and misclassification, the true toll is likely even higher."

A core focus of MISSD's mission is raising awareness of akathisia—a serious, medication-induced disorder that can lead to self-harm, violence, and suicide. Akathisia can occur even when medications are taken exactly as prescribed—or when they are stopped. It is linked to a wide variety of drugs prescribed for common conditions like nausea, hypertension, asthma, depression, and weight loss.

Symptoms may include extreme internal and external restlessness, pacing, agitation, insomnia, delirium, sudden personality changes, and electric-shock or skin-crawling sensations.



Shelly, an Ohio resident, hopes the new digital awareness billboard on US Route 6 will help prevent akathisia and related medical harm.

"Akathisia symptoms are often misdiagnosed as signs of DSM-labeled mental illnesses," said Dolin. "This can lead to additional prescriptions—a practice known as polypharmacy—that typically worsens the disorder."

Tragically, this happened to Shelly, an [Ohio resident whose symptoms were repeatedly misdiagnosed](#) as anxiety and improperly treated.

"We eventually figured out on our own that the medication was the trigger. Yet when we tried to explain this to Shelly's doctors, we were met with disbelief and gaslighting," said her husband. "They were unfamiliar with akathisia and routinely dismissed our concerns. The lack of education about this condition is scary—especially given how many medications can cause it. This entire experience turned my wife's life upside down and could have been prevented if doctors were properly trained and truly listened to their patients."

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Wendy Dolin, MISSD Founder

Together, Shelly's family co-sponsored MISSD's first Ohio akathisia awareness campaign. Public response was so positive that an additional digital billboard was recently added in time to reach thousands of travelers over Memorial Day weekend. Located along busy U.S. Route 6 near Cedar Point amusement park and a major sports complex, the safe-patient messaging is expected to reach

millions more throughout the year.

"Mental health awareness must include informed consent about the real risks versus potential benefits of pharmaceutical products," Dolin emphasized. "Healthcare consumers and their caregivers deserve to know that these symptoms may be caused by medications and medical errors."

MISSD, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, shares real stories of lives lost or harmed by akathisia to empower the public with potentially life-saving information. Visit MISSD.co for free educational resources—including a 1-hour [online course](#) and [public health videos](#) approaching two million views.

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MISSD



Akathisia awareness saves lives.

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