

MISSD Launches National Campaign to Prevent Medication-Induced Harm

50 States, 5 Years, 1 Mission: Raise Akathisia Awareness to Save Lives

SIOUX FALLS, SD, UNITED STATES, July 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Medication-Induced Suicide Prevention and Education Foundation in Memory of Stewart Dolin ([MISSD](#)) launched its "50 in 5" initiative—a bold, five-year effort to raise awareness of akathisia in all 50 states. Akathisia, a potentially life-threatening disorder caused by certain medications, can lead to self-harm, violence, and suicide.

The public health campaign began this month in South Dakota, with digital and traditional billboards directing viewers to MISSD's website for free resources.



**Akathisia awareness saves lives.
Learn more at [MISSD.co](#).**

"Just as South Dakota's Badlands conceal sudden drop-offs—and Mount Rushmore reminds us of enduring legacies—akathisia can surface without warning, causing avoidable suffering and tragedies. But with greater awareness and education, we can build a legacy of prevention, early diagnosis, and better care," said Wendy Dolin, founder of MISSD.

“

No state should remain in the dark about akathisia. When healthcare professionals, consumers, and caregivers recognize the symptoms and causes, lives can be saved.”

Wendy Dolin, MISSD Founder

Symptoms of akathisia may include agitation, intense inner turmoil, physical restlessness, insomnia, anxiety, tachycardia (elevated heart rate), impulsivity, paresthesia (skin-crawling sensations), and sudden or uncharacteristic thoughts of suicide or violence.

Akathisia can occur when starting, stopping, or adjusting

the dose or type of many commonly prescribed medications. These include drugs prescribed for depression, nausea, high blood pressure, acne, smoking cessation, anxiety, infections, and weight loss.

Among these, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)—medications marketed for the treatment of depression but associated with risks—are often linked to akathisia. Symptoms may emerge at any point during treatment or upon SSRI withdrawal, which can sometimes be part of a broader withdrawal syndrome. Unfortunately, many individuals experiencing akathisia are misdiagnosed with worsening illness or DSM-labeled disorders, leading to increased SSRI doses or additional medications that can worsen their condition.

In one case report, a woman endured years of undiagnosed and mistreated akathisia until genetic testing revealed she was not suited for SSRIs. Yet, such testing remains rare—even among children and young adults under 25, the very group flagged in the FDA's black box suicide warning for all SSRIs. Regardless of age, MISSD recommends close monitoring when taking medications associated with akathisia, especially during medication changes, to reduce risk.

While nobody is immune to akathisia, research shows that individuals with variations in Cytochrome P450 enzymes—or other genetic factors that impair drug metabolism—may be poor metabolizers of medications associated with akathisia and therefore face a higher risk of developing the disorder.

MISSD promotes akathisia awareness and education, and offers free, non-industry-funded resources, including [accredited courses](#), [public health videos](#), brochures, and survivor testimonies. The foundation's "50 in 5" initiative will continue its expansion through 2025 and beyond.

"No state should remain in the dark about akathisia," said Dolin. "When healthcare professionals, consumers, and caregivers recognize the symptoms and causes, lives can be saved."

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As part of MISSD's "50 in 5" campaign, billboards in Sioux Falls, South Dakota raise awareness of medication-induced suicidality.

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