GUIDELINES

Guidelines for Providing Consultant and Dispensing Services to Assisted Living Residents

Preamble

Residents of all long-term care settings benefit from pharmaceutical care services provided by pharmacists. A common reason for admission to assisted living facilities is to receive assistance in medication management. In recent years, there has been rapid growth of the assisted living industry. A variety of terms are used to describe this industry, including board and care, residential care, and other descriptors.

These guidelines are intended to:

- Enable residents of assisted living facilities to receive the pharmaceutical care services needed to maintain their independence and highest level of functioning
- Direct pharmacists who provide consulting and dispensing services to assisted living settings
- Inform management of assisted living facilities about services they should expect to receive from consultant pharmacists and the dispensing pharmacy
- Inform residents, family members, policy makers, and others about the important role of pharmacy services in the assisted living setting

Consultant Pharmacist Services

The consultant pharmacist promotes optimal drug therapy outcomes for assisted living residents and oversees the entire spectrum of pharmaceutical services in the assisted living facility. To achieve these outcomes, the consultant pharmacist must successfully execute the following activities:

- Provide pharmaceutical care to assisted living residents. Pharmaceutical care is the responsible provision of drug therapy for the purpose of achieving definite outcomes that improve a patient's quality of life. Pharmaceutical care involves the identification, prevention and resolution of medication-related problems.

The provision of pharmaceutical care to patients is an ongoing, interactive process. Periodic follow-up by the pharmacist is needed in order to evaluate the patient's progress toward achieving therapeutic outcomes from drug therapy. In addition, interventions by the pharmacist may be triggered by the initiation of a new medication, the occurrence of an adverse drug reaction or an indication that the patient is not adhering to the prescribed drug regimen.
• When evaluating the drug therapy of each resident, the consultant pharmacist shall consider all pertinent patient data, which may include:
  1. Diagnoses and therapeutic objectives
  2. Food and drug allergies
  3. Medical history
  4. Physical assessments
  5. Weight, age, gender
  6. Current complaints
  7. Vital signs
  8. Progress notes
  9. Laboratory and diagnostic test results
  10. Nutritional status
  11. Mental status
  12. Nursing/caregiver observations

All patients require drug therapy to be: (1) appropriately indicated, (2) effective, (3) safe, and (4) convenient. The objectives of the drug therapy review by the pharmacist include:

  13. Assess the appropriateness and rationality of drug therapy
  14. Evaluate adherence to the prescribed drug therapy by the resident
  15. Assess resident use of over-the-counter medications and herbal/natural products
  16. Identify and assess possible adverse effects of drug therapy, including allergies and drug interactions
  17. Evaluate progress in achieving therapeutic objectives
  18. Recommend strategies to improve effectiveness, decrease adverse effects, or enhance adherence to drug therapy

• Provide education to residents relating to medication use, side effects, wellness strategies, and other topics
• Develop policies and procedures for pharmaceutical services that outline the specific services to be provided, guidelines for use of medications in the facility, minimum standards for dispensing pharmacies, and quality assurance standards
• Provide direction and oversight regarding all aspects of the acquisition and handling of medications in the assisted living facility. This may include some or all of the following considerations:
  1. Receipt and interpretation of physician’s orders
  2. Order and receipt of medications
  3. Labeling of all drugs
  4. Drug distribution systems
  5. Systems to provide timely delivery of drugs and biologicals
  6. Storage of drugs and biologicals
  7. Expiration dating of medications
  8. Parameters for drug use, including medication administration
  9. Accuracy and efficiency of drug administration
  10. Compliance with physician’s orders
11. Accountability and handling of controlled substances
12. Adequate record keeping
13. Monitoring and assistance with self-administration of medicines
14. Return, release, and/or destruction of discontinued or expired drugs
15. Compliance with state and federal laws and regulations
16. Quality assurance procedures including drug utilization evaluation

- Provide in-service education to facility personnel on pharmaceutical policies and procedures, medication administration, pharmacology and drug therapy, and the monitoring of drug therapy for possible adverse effects and the attainment of therapeutic objectives
- Communicate effectively with the resident, family members, resident’s physicians, and facility personnel:
  1. Communicate pertinent findings and recommendations directly with the resident or caregiver and resident’s physician, either verbally or in writing, as appropriate
  2. Distribute written reports of drug therapy reviews to facility personnel, as appropriate, and establish procedures for monitoring timely follow-up to recommendations
  3. Provide drug information to physicians, facility personnel, and resident and family members
  4. Take steps to facilitate having reports acted upon

Dispensing Pharmacy Services

Pharmacies that provide medications to residents of assisted living facilities should conform to the policies and procedures of the facility. Pharmacy services that would be desirable include:

- Prospective review of dispensed medications (including screening for drug interactions, allergies, adherence, etc.)
- Delivery of medications to the facility
- Availability of drug information for the resident
- Twenty-four hour emergency call service
- Compliance enhancing packaging for medications
- Medication documentation needed by the facility
- Label dispensed medications with beyond-use dates

Professional Competencies

*General Competencies for Pharmacists*

Pharmacists who are involved in providing services to assisted living residents, whether dispensing medications to these residents or providing consultant services, should have certain competencies. These include:

- The ability to effectively communicate with the following:
1. Residents and caregivers as needed to obtain resident drug histories, perform resident interviews, and provide counsel about medications
2. Physicians and facility personnel as needed to successfully implement drug therapy recommendations, and improve patient care outcomes
   - Knowledge of the physiology of the aging process, the social and psychological needs of the aged patient, and the impact of these age-related changes on drug therapy outcomes
   - A thorough understanding of the rational use of drugs and the proper application of drugs to diseases
   - Knowledge and proficiency in assessing the use and application of new drugs and drug technology, including complex equipment and delivery mechanisms
   - A thorough understanding of the development and application of drug therapy monitoring parameters
   - Knowledge of the stability characteristics and storage requirements for drugs and biologicals
   - Knowledge about laws and regulations pertaining to pharmacy practice and long-term care settings

Consultant pharmacist competencies

The consultant pharmacist practicing in assisted living facilities must have special knowledge and proficiency and must be able to apply that knowledge in evaluating and making recommendations to improve drug therapy outcomes and quality of life for residents. The consultant pharmacist also applies expertise to help maintain the assisted living facility’s compliance with all applicable laws and regulations governing pharmacy services in the assisted living setting. In order to achieve these outcomes, the consultant pharmacist should develop and maintain the following qualifications:

- The knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively provide pharmaceutical care to older adults
- The knowledge and proficiency to apply principles of continuous quality improvement to assist the facility in establishing an appropriate system to assist residents with medication administration
- The ability to effectively participate on interdisciplinary teams and committees responsible for the development and assessment of all therapeutic programs and all aspects of care for residents
- The ability to improve therapeutic outcomes for residents through in-service programs and training for facility personnel covering a broad range of topics designed to improve the delivery of pharmacy services
- Knowledge and proficiency in:
  1. The legal responsibilities of the consultant pharmacist to the assisted living facility and to its residents
  2. All state and federal laws and regulations governing pharmacy services including acquisition, disposition, handling, storage, and administration of medications in assisted living facilities
  3. State and federal laws and regulations governing the operations of assisted
living facilities.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

Pharmacists will practice in a prudent and professional manner with regard to legal and ethical considerations. The pharmacist will abide by these professional standards:

1. Uphold the covenant with the resident to place the needs of the resident foremost at all times, including the right to confidentiality and the right to direct their own care
2. Practice within the bounds of all state and federal regulations
3. Practice within the bounds of the Code of Ethics of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists
4. Establish a written contractual agreement with the assisted living facility for consultant pharmacy services that is separate and distinct from any agreements regarding the provision of drugs. This agreement should outline the administrative and clinical functions and responsibilities of the consultant pharmacist and set forth any and all financial or compensatory agreements between the consultant pharmacist and the assisted living facility. The contract should completely disclose all aspects of this relationship.

References: