

THE QUARTERLY CONNECTION

Quarterly Report from Pharma-Care, Inc., Health Care Consultation Specialists

First Quarter 2013

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CMS Clarification of Guidance Related to Medication Errors

In a memorandum released on November 2, 2012, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provided clarification on three specific topics related to medication errors and pharmacy services:

- **Medication Errors:** Potential medication errors related to medication administration via feeding tube and administration timing for metered dose inhalers and proton pump inhibitors and survey implications.
- **Medication Administration Practices:** The practice of “borrowing” medications and issues related to diversion, control, reconciliation, and disposal of medications, including fentanyl patches.
- **Medication Regimen Reviews for Stays Under 30 Days and/or Changes in Condition:** The need for pharmacist medication regimen reviews when a resident experiences a change in condition and/or for residents admitted for less than 30 days.

These clarifications are effective immediately. The complete policy should be communicated with all survey and certification staff, their managers, and the State/Regional Office training coordinators within 30 days of the memorandum. The complete memorandum is available to read at:

www.pharmacareinc.com/files/SrvyCrtLtr1302NH.pdf

Attention Assisted Living Facilities: Train Your CNAs to Become Certified Medication Aides

Pharma-Care, Inc. is a provider of state-approved classes for CMA certification. Classes total 30 hours of instruction over five days either on-site or at our Clark classroom. Students must also complete three supervised med passes and take a state exam.

Call Maureen Ziegler for information:
(732) 574-9015, ext. 105

Prescription Drug Disposal Legislation

On November 20, 2012, Governor Chris Christie signed into law legislation (S-81) sponsored by Senator Christopher “Kip” Bateman that prohibits health care facilities from discharging prescription medications into public sewer or septic systems.

This law:

- requires the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to issue recommendations for the proper disposal of unused medications within 90 days after the date of enactment of this bill into law.
- requires every health care institution, within 90 days after date of enactment, to submit to the DHSS and the DEP, a plan for the proper disposal of unused prescription medications.
- requires the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), in consultation with the DEP, to approve or reject a submitted plan within 90 days. If an institution’s plan were to be rejected, they would resubmit a revised plan within 30 days after receiving notice of rejection.

A health care facility that violates this law is subject to a maximum civil administrative penalty of \$1,000 for a first violation and \$2,500 for each subsequent violation.

Pharma-Care, Inc. will keep our clients apprised as regulations become established for this new law.

Medications Affected By “Sandy” Power Outages

Attorney General Jeffrey Chiesa and the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs advised pharmacists and consumers in New Jersey to dispose of any temperature-sensitive medications that may have lost effectiveness by power outages during Hurricane Sandy.

Especially of concern are temperature sensitive medications that must be relied upon to potentially save a patient’s life during an emergency. Among the medications noted are epinephrine injectors and nitroglycerin sublingual tablets.

Source: NJ Today.Net



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EPIC Corner

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Super storm Sandy hit the EPIC department with all its fury as it may have affected you. After nine days, power was restored to our office and EPIC was back online to serve you.



As the survey teams begin to look closer at potentially inappropriate medications (PIMS), EPIC will continue to alert your facility about residents who are receiving PIMS. Please make sure your prescribers have placed adequate documentation in the medical record indicating the rationale for the use of a PIM. Having this documentation in the medical record will help your facility not only during survey time, but at all times since the safety and well-being of the residents are the reasons we choose to serve this population.

Inappropriate Crying or Laughing

Pseudobulbar affect (PBA) is a neurological condition characterized by frequent involuntary outbursts of crying and/or laughing that are excessive or contrary to one's emotional state. These episodes are sudden and intense, often recur several times a day in a stereotypical fashion, and can last from seconds to minutes.



Unlike depression, PBA is not a mood disorder. In PBA, whatever emotion a patient is expressing is not matched with the emotion they feel. With depression, the mood matches the feeling and is expressed with crying. Also, PBA episodes are brief and always associated with an underlying neurological condition such as ALS, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, MS, Parkinson's disease, stroke, or traumatic brain injury.

This behavior may be upsetting to a patient and can lead to isolation. If you recognize this pattern in a resident, speak with their physician regarding medication for this condition.

Source: Annals of Long Term Care/ Clinical Geriatrics, January 2012

Hearing Aids and Dementia

Hearing impairments in patients with dementia can cause significant psychosocial distress and poor health outcomes. Although it is important to screen these patients for hearing impairment, this can be a particularly challenging endeavor. The paucity of evidence-based clinical strategies and tools focusing on the cognitively impaired patient with hearing impairment underscores this problem. (We) recommend routine screening for both hearing impairments and hearing aid functionality in nursing home residents, making these measures a part of the care plan of all patients. Increasing awareness among staff and family members about hearing impairment and its related behavioral manifestations if left untreated can also help these problems be quickly identified and corrected.



Source: Annals of Long Term Care, August 2012

Welcome to Our New Clients

University SurgiCenter
Sunflower Medical Adult Day Care Center
Arnold Walter Nursing and Rehabilitation
Hope Pediatrics Medical Day Care
Hoboken University Medical Center
(Transitional Care Unit)



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