

PHARMACY BEST PRACTICES DURING A PANDEMIC

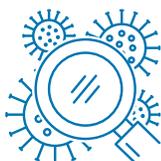


As resident care services are vying for your resources during this time, it is important to be aware of the regulatory, clinical, and operational impact of COVID-19 on pharmacy services and medication management. Below are best practices that support the core functions of drug management, medication pass optimization, consultant pharmacist collaboration, and regulatory compliance.



REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

While the COVID-19 pandemic has promoted the relaxation/suspension of certain state and federal nursing home regulations, those governing pharmacy services and medication management remain intact. With long-term care systems and routines currently disrupted, it's important to keep medication management a priority - to maintain compliance and most importantly, to promote resident safety and well-being.



INFECTION CONTROL

CDC and CMS have regularly published guidance and best practices to long-term care facilities since the development of the COVID-19 pandemic. To avoid unintended consequences, nursing homes should coordinate with their Medical Director, Director of Nursing, Infection Preventionist and Consultant/Operational Pharmacists when considering changes to systems which impact pharmacy services and medication management.

Examples include:

- Delivery/return of medication and equipment
- Interim drug supply management
- Interfacing with pharmacy staff, medical record access
- Consolidation of the medication pass



MEDICATION PASS OPTIMIZATION

A significant amount of resources are required to safely administer medications to residents in long term care facilities. With staffing shortages becoming common place, many providers are exploring ways to decrease the time spent on the medication pass. Using an evidence based, resident centered approach to eliminate unnecessary drugs, reduce unnecessary monitoring including hold parameters, and condense medication times can free up resources without negatively impacting resident care.



COLLABORATIVE OUTCOMES

Prescribers, pharmacists, and nurses all play an important role when it comes to consistently reviewing medication regimens to ensure that your residents are receiving the most ideal therapeutic approach. Avoiding potentially inappropriate medications and removing unnecessary medications, improves resident safety, clinical outcomes, and increases quality of life. Focused medication reviews by your consultant pharmacist can identify medications that can safely be held or discontinued during staffing shortages or in order to enhance nursing efficiency.

Areas of focus can include, but are not limited to, supplements, vitamins, herbal products, sliding scale insulin, and blood sugar checks. Consultant pharmacists can also review blood pressure monitoring for stable residents and recommend reductions where appropriate. A team approach to identifying non-essential laboratory monitoring may also be considered in order to reduce foot traffic in and out of the facility.



COMMUNICATION

Communication is key during the rapidly changing clinical/operational landscape prompted by COVID-19. Regular, clear and goal-centered communication with your operational and consultant pharmacists is vital to prevent avoidable medication related issues and negative outcomes.

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