

MEDICATION REGIMEN REVIEW INFORMATION SHEET FOR ASSISTED LIVING

Getting Medication Management Right in Senior Living

Managing medications is a critical competency for long-term care and senior living organizations. The average person over the age of 65 uses 10-14 medications to manage chronic illnesses. Multiply that by 40 or so residents in the average assisted living community and the challenge becomes clear and astounding.

A key challenge for any community is dispensing the right dose of the right medicine at the right time, particularly when medications are coming from multiple sources and residents have varying degrees of self-sufficiency. About one in three older persons taking at least five medications will experience an adverse drug event each year, and about two-thirds of these patients will require medical attention, emergency room visits, hospitalization, and possibly death. Assisted living providers can dramatically improve those statistics.

The Challenge of Managing Medications in Assisted Living

While skilled nursing facilities are bound by sophisticated requirements governing medication management, most assisted living communities do not have those built-in controls. Unlike their peers in skilled nursing, assisted living residents take a substantially higher number of over-the-counter drugs which can lead to serious interactions with prescription medications. It is concerning that physicians, and even some caregivers, may not be aware that some of these medications are being used. As a result, they may not be audited for expiration dates, charted as part of the medication record, or identified when potentially harmful.

To make matters more complex, residents may get prescriptions from multiple pharmacies, creating an exponential impact on their assisted living community. It is not unusual for a single community to have meds coming in from as many as a dozen different pharmacies (local and mail order). Nursing staff must then turn their focus away from resident care to coordinate and reconcile inconsistencies among the different dispensing entities. This can result in redundancies, duplication, and overlap. Unmanaged, these situations can lead to higher incidences of falls,

Approximately 95% of adverse drug reactions are predictable, and about 28% are preventable.



Applying Best Practices from Skilled Nursing

Seniors in assisted living are prescribed 10 –12 medications, on average. The promising news is that many drug-related issues can be prevented by pharmacist-conducted Medication Regimen Reviews (MRR).

While improving clinical outcomes and quality of life are the larger goals of the MRR process, this approach helps identify and prevent adverse drug events (ADE) or injuries that may be caused by:

- Use of medications inappropriate for the resident's condition, diagnosis, age, or co-morbidities
- Inappropriate dosage or duration of therapy
- Duplicate therapies
- Burdens associated with polypharmacy (for example, taking 9 medications or more generally guarantees the occurrence of an ADE)

Taking a Holistic Approach

Quality of life—as well as risks versus benefits—are important considerations during the evaluation process. Medication Regimen Reviews (MRR) involve a comprehensive review of an individual's complete list of medications, including prescriptions, over the counter, supplements, and vitamins to determine whether they are appropriate and effective for the medical condition(s) and intended treatments.

Using a collaborative approach that includes pharmacy, clinical, the resident, and their family members, MRRs draw on insight and observations of the entire team in evaluating and recommending a personalized regimen. The result is the most beneficial medication therapy possible.

Typically, the review is organized around the following questions:

- Is the medication indicated for the resident's diagnosis?
- Is the medication the right choice?
- Is the medication dose and dosage form correct?
- Is the duration of therapy correct?
- Is the medication effective?
- Is the medication causing any toxicity or side-effect?
- Is the resident receiving medications as ordered?
- Is the medication properly monitored?
- Is there any duplication in medication therapy?
- Is the resident receiving any medications that are no longer needed?
- Is the resident not receiving medication that is beneficial and appropriate?

Medication Regimen Review is Not a Single Fix With an End Date

It is an ongoing process that helps ensure each resident's treatment remains appropriate and optimized whenever medications, medical conditions, or other factors change. By incorporating this process into services provided, assisted living communities can ensure the best possible clinical and quality of life outcomes for each resident.

To learn how your community can benefit from Medication Regimen Review contact us at:

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