



## What is Medication Management?

Teamwork is the key to any great healthcare team. Desert Oasis Healthcare has expanded its team to include Pharmacists to compliment the care you receive from your physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. These drug experts can offer education to patients and healthcare professionals, recommendations for drug therapy to physicians, and answer any questions our patients may have in regards to their medications. Medication management is just another way to keep our patients safe and healthy.

## What do we do?

- Anticoagulation Management Program
- Hepatitis C Treatment Program
- Medication Quality and Safety Program
- General Drug Information Questions
- Education In-services for Clinical Staff

## ANTICOAGULATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

### What is anticoagulation?

Coagulation is a normal process the body employs in an attempt to stop bleeding. In response to injury, the blood system's clotting cascade becomes activated, and a blood clot forms. This results in an important life preserving defense mechanism.

However, there are instances when this clotting cascade may become activated in an abnormal way. This allows blood clots to form within the body's vascular system. These blood clots can pose a threat to health and can, in fact, be a cause of serious debility or even death.

Anticoagulation refers to medications or processes that work to prevent the body from forming these dangerous blood clots.

### Who needs anticoagulation?

Anticoagulation therapy is indicated for a wide array of patients. People who have heart valve replacements or suffer from an abnormal heart beat often time need anticoagulation to prevent stroke. Patients who have recently had major surgery or who have cancer may need anticoagulation therapy if they are at higher risk for forming blood clots. People who have already developed a blood clot in their body, such as in the deep veins of the leg, will need to be on anticoagulant therapy for some time afterward. Some people have genetic factors that make them able to form abnormal blood clots very easily. Such patients require lifetime anticoagulation therapy.

### Why Anticoagulation Services?

Medications that are used to thin the blood, such as warfarin (brand name Coumadin) and enoxaparin (brand name Lovenox), provide definite proven benefits for patients. They have been demonstrated to significantly reduce the risk of stroke and clot recurrence in patients who use them. However, these medications can also pose a challenge to the healthcare professional who prescribes them. The dosage required by an individual patient to maintain the desired level anticoagulation may vary widely. Anticoagulant medications can interact significantly with the other medications a patient may be taking. Dietary changes may also have an effect. Laboratory tests must be performed on a regular basis in order to ensure the appropriate level



of anticoagulation has been achieved. This may result in anticoagulation dosage adjustments. If anticoagulants are not carefully monitored, blood may become too thick or too thin. If too thick, the patient is at higher risk for forming clots. If too thin, the patient is at higher risk for bleeding. The anticoagulation services provide careful monitoring of each and every patient at the center in order to ensure that the maximal benefits of anticoagulation therapy are achieved.



## **MEDICATION QUALITY AND SAFETY PROGRAM**

### **What do we do?**

- Educate patients on their medications
- Screen for drug-drug interactions
- Screen for drug-disease interactions
- Attempt to reduce the number of medications taken monthly
- Order necessary labs to check for appropriateness of medications
- Discuss all changes with the patient's primary care physician

### **Who is this service available to?**

This service is available to all members of Desert Oasis Healthcare. Patients who are interested should contact their primary care physicians and ask to be referred to this service.

### **What do I have to gain from this service?**

Each referred member will meet one on one with a pharmacist to discuss their medications. You will have an opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and have an active role in your healthcare.

You will gain...

- Information about your medications; how and why to take them correctly
- Security in knowing that a drug expert has reviewed your complete medication list
- Reduction in your monthly cost of medications
- Updated information and lab results for your primary care physician

### **What do we do?**

- Provide patient education (individual and group classes)
- Schedule laboratory testing
- Make dosage adjustments
- Notify you of dosage changes (by phone, letter or e-mail)
- Remind you of missed appointments
- Manage prescription refills of anticoagulant medication
- Evaluate new medications or dietary changes for significant interaction potential
- Members are enrolled in the anticoagulation services by their physician.



## HEPATITIS C TREATMENT PROGRAM

### **What is Hepatitis C?**

Hepatitis is the inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis C is a type of liver inflammation that is caused by a virus given the letter C. This virus is transmitted most commonly through the blood by intravenous drug use, blood transfusions prior to stringent testing, and sexual intercourse. Left untreated, hepatitis C may lead to cirrhosis, or scarring of the liver, and in some cases, liver cancer.

### **Is there treatment available?**

Yes. A combination of two drugs, interferon (injection) and ribavirin (pills), taken for 6-12 months have been shown to clear the virus from over half of the patients who take them.

### **Why is a Pharmacist involved?**

Treatment may not be for everyone, but our trained Pharmacists can help you decide if treatment is best for you. They are also able to manage the side effects that may accompany treatment such as fatigue, nausea, and depression. Those participating in the program will receive education about the disease, treatment, and preventing the spread of hepatitis C.

### **What do we do?**

All members interested in this program should ask their physician to refer them, and all referred patients will receive education about hepatitis C and treatment. Once all preliminary laboratory tests and education have been completed, treatment will start and our pharmacists will see you once a month to be sure your treatment is progressing. If necessary, our Pharmacists can manage side effects, answer questions, and watch for future problems.

### **About Our Team:**

Our professional Team is lead by our Medical Directors, Dr. Henry Bellaci and Dr. Michael Griffis. Dr. Teresa Hodgkins, Pharm.D, Dr. Jan Wier, Pharm.D, and Dr. Lindsey Hernandez, Pharm.D are clinical pharmacists with specialty training in anticoagulation therapy, and medication management. Our dedicated and caring clinic assistants, Russell, Maureen and Anna, provide valuable support to the patients who receive ongoing care from our center.

