Improving Care, Reducing Cost

Helping patients stay out of the hospital after an admission is the most valuable part of Dr. Rachel Bauer’s job. As a Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist at the George E. Wahlen Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, patients appreciate her help, and administrators value the financial benefit that her unique position adds to the team.

“It’s like the opposite of the emergency department. I take care of them on their way out of the hospital,” she states.

Ensuring Patient Well-Being

When a Veteran is admitted to a community hospital for a psychiatric disorder, often in a rural area where there is no VA hospital, Dr. Bauer’s job begins immediately. She is alerted that a Veteran has been admitted and begins the process of coordinating access to outpatient medications. She screens for various medication-related concerns and availability.

She coordinates care between the inpatient psychiatrist, the discharge planner, and the patient’s primary care team at the VA. The inpatient team sends her all of the Veteran’s prescriptions to be filled prior to discharge. This process ensures that the patient has the supply of medications they need to avoid any interruptions in care as they head home.
Getting to the Root of the Problem

A 45-year-old Veteran was admitted to a rural community hospital for suicidal thinking. Upon reviewing his medical record, Dr. Bauer noted that he was being treated for intractable migraine headaches, which was contributing to his suicidal thinking. He lost his job because of excessive sick days due to headaches. After speaking with the patient, Dr. Bauer was able to refer him to a VA headache specialist and expedite receipt of a non-formulary medication which reduced his headaches. The patient credits Dr. Bauer for helping him get to the root of his problems.

“Working with Dr. Bauer takes the guesswork out of what tends to be difficult transitions of care for people with mental illnesses. She knows her patients well, is thorough, and is a fierce advocate for their ongoing success.”

- Camille Giles, BSN, RN

Case Manager, Salt Lake Regional Medical Center

Making a Difference

Coordinates care with 14+ mental health facilities in Utah and surrounding states

Works with outpatient addiction services, primary care, mental health, and crisis teams

139 issues resolved in 1 month (May 2018)

This information brought to you by the College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP), a professional association representing psychiatric pharmacists nationwide. Our members integrate into teams of health care professionals, making a difference in overall costs, treatment efficiencies, patient recovery and quality of life.

Learn more at cpnp.org/psychpharm.