***Medication Therapy Management for pharmaceutical safety***

If you’re in a Medicare drug plan and take medications for different medical conditions, you may be eligible to get services, at no cost to you, through a Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program. This program helps you and your doctor make sure that your medications are working to improve your health.

“MTM is an initiative that was started several years ago trying to get the pharmacists more involved and making sure patients are really on the medications that they need to be on and that they’re working well for them,” said Jessica Toebben, pharmacist and Director of the Bloomsdale Pharmacy. “So now there’s a big push from both Medicare and Medicaid to really get the pharmacists more involved.”

Toebben explained the need for MTM.

“Medication-related problems and medication mismanagement are a massive public health problem in the United States,” she explained. “Experts estimate that 1.5 million preventable adverse events occur each year that result in $177 billion in injury and death. Medications save or improve lives, but taken incorrectly or in excess they can make patients worse.”  The problem is compounded by the fact that most patients hide their confusion from their doctors because they are too ashamed and intimidated to ask for help.”

To catch and resolve the more at-risk patients, pharmacists have designed a formal but consumer-friendly program—the MTM. Usually MTM is used when a patient is taking many (eight plus) separate drugs. It is typically delivered as a face-to-face visit between the pharmacist and patient.

“We go over their complete medication list, and that includes prescription medication, over the counter meds, vitamins and herbals, anything that they take on a regular basis,” Toebben explained. “We make sure they know how to take their medications; ask if they’re experiencing any side effects; look for drug interaction; and talk to them to see if they have any concerns with a high cost or high co-pay.”

Toebben explained that the medication therapy management services are like an appointment with your doctor, but you meet one-on-one with a specially-trained pharmacist. By working directly with a pharmacist, you get that extra attention you need to keep your medications on the right track.

“It’s just nice to have that second pair of eyes looking at medications,” she explained. “Pharmacists working closely with older adults can help them avoid dangerous and costly medication-use problems. Evidence shows that MTM reduces the use of unnecessary physician and hospital services by reducing adverse health events and ultimately total health costs.”

As a Part D member, your plan includes Medication Therapy Management services at no cost to you, but MTMS are not only for Medicare beneficiaries, anyone can take advantage of the program and in many cases Toebben will waive any fee.

“The providers and myself are kind of a tag team,” Toebben said. “In addition to medications, we also go over any allergies and medical conditions just to make sure their whole medical picture is complete. Those records are then sent to their physician so they know we talked.”

To make a Medication Therapy Management appointment, call the Bloomsdale Pharmacy at 573-483-2626. Toebben suggests bringing a list of all medications, or better yet, bring the actual medication bottles to your appointment.