



Media Release
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October is time to recognize pharmacists, technicians

By Kim Zamarripa

FORT HOOD, Texas – October is American Pharmacist Month, and in recognition of this observance, Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center encourages beneficiaries to get to know your pharmacist and your medication.



Figure 1: CRDMC Main pharmacy services over 5000 prescriptions per day, seeing on average 2000 people daily. Photo Credit: Kim Zamarripa

There are over 300,000 licensed pharmacists in the United States; each specifically trained as a medication expert to ensure safe and effective use of medications.

Every year in the U.S., failure to take medications as prescribed causes more than 1.5 million preventable medication-related adverse events and costs the health care system approximately \$290 billion. The likelihood of medication errors

occurring decreases substantially when patients know their pharmacist and feel comfortable asking questions and seeking the pharmacist's advice.

Lt. Col. Kevin Roberts, CRDAMC Chief of Pharmacy, oversees 44 pharmacists and 74 pharmacy technicians who support 13 outpatient pharmacy's within a 45-mile radius of the medical center, including troop clinic pharmacies, community based medical homes (CBMH), an outpatient hospital pharmacy, and an inpatient pharmacy. Combined, these pharmacies dispense over 5,000 prescriptions every day.

“Your pharmacist is an integral part of the health care team, working to ensure the best selection and management of your prescription and nonprescription medicines. Pharmacists continue to serve as information resources, but are expanding their roles as direct care providers; directly assessing patients and assisting providers in managing anticoagulation, high cholesterol, asthma, multiple medications (polypharmacy) and other disease states.”

Although patients are ultimately responsible for managing their healthcare, utilizing the pharmacist can help you understand your medications and avoid problems with medication allergies, drug interactions and excessive medication use.

“By utilizing our pharmacies for your prescription needs, you’re guaranteed access to a pharmacist,” he said. “Pharmacists provide patients knowledge and collaboratively work with their health care team to enhance medication use and outcomes.”

Pharmacists don’t act alone; they’re supported by a team of pharmacy technicians to ensure safe and efficient provision of medication therapy. Pharmacy technicians are the backbone of the pharmacy. Each technician has specialized training and skill in assessing, processing and troubleshooting prescription orders. These professionals are vital to the success of the medication use process.

CRDAMC Pharmacy has some of the “top technicians” in the Army Medical Department. This year, Army Pharmacy’s top clinical technician was CRDAMC’s own Ms. Beth Rayman.

According to Roberts, “(Rayman is) a fine example of the caliber and competence that supports CRDAMC and Fort Hood Pharmacy operations.”

SIDEBAR

There are multiple prescription options available to Fort Hood Pharmacy beneficiaries; including self-care prescriptions, prescription drop-off, drive-through pharmacy at Thomas Moore Health Clinic, or Tricare’s mail-order pharmacy. Each CRDAMC clinic has its own pharmacy to support patients enrolled to those clinics; collaborating with the clinic health care team to optimize selection and provision of medications.



Figure 3: CRDAMC Pharmacy Technician Beth Rayman won the 2013 U.S. Army Jeanette M. Oakley Civilian Pharmacy Technician of the Year. Photo Credit: Kim Zamarripa

CRDAMC main pharmacy also offers a prescription drop-off option to assist in providing more flexibility with your personal time. This option is available from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Thursdays. If your prescription is dropped off before noon, it will be ready the same day at 4 p.m. If your prescription is dropped off after noon it will be ready to pick-up the following morning after 9 a.m. So instead of sitting and waiting for a prescription, beneficiaries can go back to work, run errands, or even come back the next day at their convenience.

The Tricare mail order pharmacy is another great option for patients who require medications that aren’t regularly stocked in the CRDAMC pharmacies or have prescriptions that require regular refills.

All mail order medicines are delivered directly to your house which eliminates the hassle of dealing with traffic, parking or lines at the pharmacy and it saves money in fuel costs. Small co-pays may apply with this service. While there is usually no copay for generic prescriptions, there is a \$13 co-pay for brand names and a \$43 co-pay for non-formulary medications for up to a 90-day supply.



Figure 2: A pharmacy technician prepares injectable drugs in the pharmacy’s sterile preparation area. On average, 250-300 injectable drugs and IV’s are made in a sterile environment. each day. Photo Credit: Kim Zamarripa

To use the Tricare mail order pharmacy beneficiaries should ask their doctor for a 90-day supply (one prescription with three refills) of their medication, then log on to www.express-scripts.com and print a prescription order form, or call 877-363-1303. Once the form is filled out, mail it with the written prescription and payment to the address on the form.



Figure 4: During recent upgrades, the pharmacy added the ScriptPro, a robotic medication dispensing device. Pharmacist input prescriptions in the computer and the ScriptPro measures and fills the individual prescription. Photo credit: Kim Zamarripa

Beneficiaries who prefer retail pharmacies can still use this option. Sometimes this option is necessary, especially if the military pharmacy is closed or doesn't carry a medication needed immediately, but remember all retail pharmacies will require a co-pay. Usually those fees are \$5 for generic prescriptions, \$17 for brand names and \$44 for non-formulary medications for a 30-day supply.

For a list of retail pharmacies that honor Tricare, visit the Express Scripts website at www.express-scripts.com.

For more information on the CRDAMC pharmacy hours of operation, a complete list of formulary medication or general information, please visit our website at www.crdamc.amedd.army.mil, and click on the pharmacy link located in the left hand column.