



# Medication Therapy Management Program Pilot

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## Abstract

MEDiC is an organization composed of interdisciplinary student-run free clinics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. At one of our seven clinic locations, we have recently implemented a Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program. By introducing a pharmacist as a member of our care team, patients now have the opportunity to receive a wide range of clinical services that focus on medications and medication-related problems. Thus far, we have received positive feedback from the patients seen in MTM clinic, and we have begun screening patients who are candidates for MTM services. We are continually developing new ideas and making improvements to the program in order to best serve our patients while fostering MEDiC's mission of interdisciplinary teamwork and teaching.

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MEDiC is an interdisciplinary student organization at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health consisting of medical, pharmacy, nursing, physician assistant, and physical therapy students. These students volunteer at seven different student-run free clinics throughout Madison, Wisconsin. MEDiC's goals are to connect the underserved populations of Madison with healthcare and to promote a culture of interdisciplinary learning among health professional students.

In a typical clinic encounter, interdisciplinary pairs of students see a patient together to elicit the patient's chief concern, obtain a health history, and perform a physical exam. The students present the case to a physician volunteer, who provides guidance to the students and then evaluates the patient together with the students to develop a plan of care. The physician and student volunteers can prescribe and dispense medications, offer lifestyle counseling, and connect patients with community resources and other healthcare referrals.

In the spring of 2015, MEDiC piloted a Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program at the Salvation Army location that allows pharmacists to volunteer in the clinic. Patients are eligible for an MTM appointment if they take three or more medications for chronic medical conditions, use medical devices such as inhalers or glucometers, would benefit from lifestyle modifications, suffer from poor medication adherence, are experiencing adverse effects from their medications, or have low health literacy.

In an MTM appointment, the patient sits down with a pharmacist, a pharmacy student volunteer, and a non-pharmacy student volunteer to ensure all of the patient's medications are safe and effective. Initially, the two students see the patient as a team and take a thorough medication history, in addition to gathering pertinent lifestyle information that might be affecting the patient's health. After the initial interview, the students present the case to the pharmacist and together come up with a plan regarding any necessary interventions, recommendations to the patient's other providers, or

patient education regarding medication use and lifestyle habits. Each patient leaves with a wallet card listing his or her medications that he or she can bring to future appointments and update as needed. In addition to coordinating the MTM visit, the pharmacist is also available in the staffing room to assist physicians with drug therapy recommendations for patients being seen in the general clinic and to aid student volunteers in identifying pertinent side effects and administration information for medications that are prescribed in the clinic.

If successful, this program will provide patients with a forum to address any medication-related concerns and will allow patients to gain a better understanding of their disease states and the medications being used to treat these diseases. It will also help to foster MEDiC's mission of interdisciplinary teamwork and teaching with the utilization of a pharmacist in the clinic. After observing the pharmacists' strategies to improve medication adherence and patient education along with the questions posed by pharmacists to elicit information regarding a patient's medication regimen, students from other health disciplines will be better prepared to employ these methods in their own practices.

Since recently introducing the MTM services, we have begun to identify patients who would most benefit from an appointment. One example was a woman with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) who was a smoker and had been seen in the general clinic. She had questions about how to use her inhalers, so she was seen for an MTM visit following her initial appointment. She had three different inhalers that she had never been taught how to use. Therefore, she had received very little benefit from her prescriptions. During her visit in the MTM clinic, she was shown how to use her inhalers and was able to teach back the appropriate method. The pharmacist and students also addressed her tobacco use. They

discussed the benefits of quitting smoking, and after the patient stated she was ready to quit, they helped her to set a quit date and addressed barriers that might arise after quitting. She also already had an appointment scheduled with her primary care provider the following week, so they recommended that she ask about receiving the pneumococcal vaccine due to her COPD diagnosis. She was very appreciative and felt strongly that MTM clinic should be offered every week.

While we have seen a number of positive encounters within our initial MTM clinics, we have experienced difficulties with patient recruitment. As the Salvation Army clinic has lately seen a low patient census, MTM has now been moved to the Southside clinic, which sees a larger volume of patients. The MTM clinic is being held once monthly to allow for patient recruitment in the weeks of general clinic leading up to the MTM date. Our intake staff and clinic coordinators in the general clinic have begun to screen for patients each week who would benefit from MTM and are providing them with a referral to return for the next MTM date. We anticipate continuing to see patients for MTM who have just been seen in the general clinic and are then referred, in addition to those who have been previously referred and report to clinic specifically for an MTM appointment.

In light of the initial positive impact the service has had for patients at Salvation Army, we hope to make MTM a permanent addition to the Southside clinic. If our new screening methods prove to be effective, our goals will be to meet twice monthly at Southside and to potentially expand the program to other clinics. As we continue to integrate new ideas into the program, there are likely to be further changes to the clinic workflow. However, our initial results are promising, and we anticipate that we will continue to reach more patients as we discover the most effective methods of advertising the MTM clinic.