

PRESS RELEASE

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WHITE RIVER MEDICAL CENTER PHARMACISTS HAVE VITAL ROLE IN PATIENT SAFETY

National Pharmacy Week Offers Opportunity for Patients to Learn about Medication Safety

Batesville, AR—Pharmacists at White River Medical Center are using National Hospital & Health-System Pharmacy Week, October 23-29, 2005; to highlight the many vital roles they have in patient care. The evolution has been especially dramatic in recent years, as pharmacists have moved beyond compounding and dispensing medications to become important members of multidisciplinary patient-care teams.

“Many consumers are not aware that pharmacists play a critical role in preventing medication errors, advising prescribers on the best drug choices, and working directly with patients to ensure they understand how to use their medications safely and effectively,” said Jody Smotherman, Pharm.D., Operations Manager, Pharmacy Department of White River Medical Center(WRMC). “Pharmacy Week is a great way to educate the public about how pharmacists can help them get the most benefit from their medicine.”

Pharmacists are experts on the thousands of medications available today, how each one works in

the body, and the ways to use each one safely and effectively. Pharmacists who graduate today attend six years of college studying medication therapy, and many pharmacists practicing in hospitals and health systems also complete post-graduate residency programs.

Hospital and health-system pharmacists have become more involved in direct patient care as pharmacy operations have advanced using highly trained, certified technicians and new technologies like robotics that dispense medications. As technology evolves—such as the addition of machine-readable codes to medication labels—patients will have greater opportunities to have a pharmacist involved in their care.

“We have participated with local community pharmacists in the past year to provide cholesterol, blood sugar screenings to the county’s residents and advise consumers on medication management,” says Maggie Miller, Pharm.D. Clinical Pharmacy Coordinator, in explaining this expanded patient care role.

Additionally, because of the complexity of medication therapies, pharmacists cooperate across various levels of care to improve patient outcomes. “For example, the hospital sponsors continuing education for community pharmacists and the pharmacists at White River Medical Center are resource for individual consultations when needed,” according to Royce Wilson, owner of Wilson Wil-Sav Pharmacy.

“With the implementation of Medicare Part D, we will see more demand placed on the nation’s pharmacists as it relates to the proper use of medication,” says Dennis F. Moore, Pharm.D. Director of Pharmacy at WRMC, and recently installed president of the Arkansas Association of Health System Pharmacists. Community pharmacists will play an increasingly important role in advising the nation’s seniors as to the plans available for the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit. However, regardless of practice location, America’s 200,000 pharmacists will be working to improve your health through a safe and efficient medication distribution system.

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