

Pharmacy Scope of Services – VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System

OVERVIEW

The VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System has 3 physical pharmacies located at the medical centers in Bath and Canandaigua, and the outpatient clinic in Rochester, New York. Additionally, pharmacy supports 3 community-based outpatient clinics in highly rural areas. These locations require medication management, clinical, and educational services to general outpatients, on-site residential rehabilitation treatment program, long-term (nursing home) care, home based primary care, urgent care, limited acute care, and outpatient medical specialties. Medical subspecialties provided by the VA Finger Lakes HCS include but are not limited to Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Pain Management, Cardiology, Urology, Neurology, Women's Health, Orthopedics, Dermatology, Optometry, and GI. In total pharmacy serves over 30,000 Veterans across the Finger Lakes region of NY and north central Pennsylvania. The pharmacy department consists of over 60 employees which includes pharmacy technicians, clinical pharmacists, clinical pharmacist practitioners, administrative support staff, chief of service, associate chiefs, and front-line supervisors. Hours of operation vary by location. Rochester Outpatient Clinic: 07:30am – 4:00pm Monday thru Friday. Canandaigua: 08:00am – 4:30pm Monday thru Friday. Bath: 08:00 – 7:30pm seven days a week, including holidays.

PATIENT POPULATION SERVED

Patients range in age from young adult to geriatric. They reside in highly rural to urban locations with a diversity of healthcare needs and disparities that need met to optimize care. The women's health population is growing in the VA and ongoing efforts to enhance services to meet the needs of this underserved population is a priority. Identification of Veterans with toxic exposures is another current priority to assure they get the health care services needed. Current Veterans enrolled have served in a variety of military settings and often have unique needs based on these experiences and locations of service. Examples of common diseases/diagnoses encountered include but is not limited to substance use disorder, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, toxic chemical exposure, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart failure, coronary artery disease, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, various cancer diagnoses, dementia, schizophrenia, bipolar, stroke, etc. As such pharmacy services must be prepared for a very diverse population with common disease states but also the unique needs of the Veteran population we serve.

PHARMACY OPERATIONS

Pharmacy operations includes procurement, storage, medication security, order/prescription processing, outpatient dispensing, inpatient unit dose, ward stock, controlled substance management, reverse distribution, and limited IV services at the Bath location. Total drug and supply item expenditures for the VA Finger Lakes HCS was approximately \$38 million in FY 2023 in association with approximately 650,000 prescriptions.

The outpatient pharmacies provide services to the main campuses as well the community-based outpatient clinics (CBOC) and rural health clinics. All new outpatient prescriptions are reviewed by a pharmacist for appropriateness at any one of three outpatient pharmacies with a majority (>80%) of these prescriptions being filled at a VA Consolidated Mail Order Pharmacy (CMOP). ScriptPro® is utilized as the dispensing system in the outpatient areas and for inventory management software to optimize

inventory. Pyxis® automated dispensing cabinets (ADC) are profiled in outpatient clinic areas to allow for bar code medication administration in these settings. Clinical Pharmacists review all prescriptions for safety and efficacy, perform medication reconciliation, resolve medication-related issues, verify the correct drug products are dispensed, counsel patients, supply medications and immunizations to clinic and procedural areas, review clinic orders prior to administration, review and process community care prescriptions, review non-formulary and prior authorization drug requests, make appropriate recommendations in accordance with VHA National Formulary, respond to customer concerns, respond to provider medication questions, and assure that Veteran care remains at the center of practice initiatives.

The inpatient pharmacy provides services to our urgent care clinic, community living centers (CLC or nursing home), residential rehabilitation (domiciliary) and acute care floor. They prepare low risk sterile compounds in a segregated compounding area which contains two certified aseptic isolators for use. Parata ATP pouch packaging solution is utilized to automate unit dose packaging processes and the PERL inspection system is utilized to enhance safety through unit dose pouch scanning. Pyxis® ADC are utilized to manage stock on the units and optimize security of controlled substances. Cart fill services in conjunction with Pyxis® ADCs are utilized in the community living centers. The pharmacists review all medication orders for safety and efficacy, complete medication reconciliation, resolve medication-related issues, process computerized medication orders, verify correct drug products are dispensed, and assure compliance with USP 797 IV sterile compounding practices. Technology supporting inpatient operations include the addition of Pyxis® Knowledge Portal software which allows for improved control of the automated dispensing capabilities.

CLINICAL PHARMACY SERVICES

The clinical pharmacy services section of the pharmacy department has over 20 clinical pharmacist practitioners (CPP) who practice under a scope of practice authorized by the medical staff as an Advance Practice Provider (APP) defined within medical staff bylaws. Across VA Finger Lakes HCS clinical pharmacy services provides direct patient care in the following practice areas: Primary Care, Women's Health, Geriatrics, Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), Mental Health, Domiciliary, Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI), Anticoagulation, Substance Use Disorder and Pain Management. The CPP provides comprehensive medication management services for Veterans in collaborative team-based models and has direct patient care responsibilities and serves as an APP to initiate, modify, extend, or discontinue medication therapy. Multiple CPPs within the VA Finger Lakes HCS prescribe controlled substances based on proper state license and DEA registration as part of the medication management service they provide. Clinical pharmacy services provided care to over 7500 Veterans in 2022 with over 25000 patient care encounters. The scope of clinical interventions by Finger Lakes CPPs included but was not limited to anticoagulation, diabetes, hypertension, lipids, tobacco cessation, COPD, alcohol use disorder, weight management, infectious disease, anemia, CHF, opioid use, substance use disorder, and pain management.

EDUCATION

The pharmacy department has affiliation agreements with University of Buffalo, St. John Fisher University, Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Binghamton University and accepts students for both IPPE and APPE experiences. Approximately 15 students per year come through VA

Finger Lakes pharmacy for an experience and that number is growing every year. Current APPE rotation offerings include ambulatory care, community pharmacy, geriatrics, mental health, and pain management.

In addition to experiential education pharmacy maintains 2 post graduate year 1 residency (PGY1) positions with accreditation sought through the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). Core experiences for this residency are built around program strengths and include Pharmacy Management/Leadership, Home Based Primary Care, Primary Care (PACT), Anticoagulation, Geriatrics, Mental Health, and Pharmacy Operations.

Pharmacy additionally provides educational support to staff, patients, and other services upon request through multiple modalities (written, verbal, etc.) and through various scheduled meetings such as the monthly Medical Staff meeting. Opportunities to provide this education are rotated through various staff member and is based upon subject matter expertise and staff development needs.

ADMINISTRATION AND QUALITY OVERSIGHT

Pharmacy service in the VA is guided by multiple accrediting bodies, policies, laws, and oversight groups. Examples include but are not limited to the Joint Commission, Ascellon (Long-term care), Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, ASHP, Office of the Inspector General, VHA Handbooks/Directives, Institute for Safe Medication Practices, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. Compliance is ultimately the responsibility of the Chief of Pharmacy working in conjunction with the pharmacy team, nursing leadership, medical leadership, VA quality management services, and other relevant stake holders relative to the standard. Pharmacy reports every other month updates on performance standards and priority metrics to the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff through the Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee. Specific accreditation issues in need of resolution are reported to the Accreditation Committee as indicated.