

C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network Newsletter

Issue 9



Please visit the
C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy
Network webpage at:
[https://
alpharmacycares.org/](https://alpharmacycares.org/)

Editor: Tessa Hastings, MS
tjh0043@auburn.edu

Hello C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network members! We enjoyed connecting with many of you at the Alabama Pharmacy Association Annual Meeting in Destin, FL this June. It was great to see you in person and learn about all of the fantastic things happening in your pharmacies. As always, if you need more referral cards and/or pre-stamped envelopes, please let us know!

In this issue, we would like to highlight our featured member, Vernetta Myers Director of Marketing and Business Development at Pharmacy Services of Mobile and one of

our very first network members. Ms. Leisa Askew, from the Lee Russell Council of Governments is our featured ADRC member. You can learn more about these individuals on pages 4 and 5.

In this issue, we bring your attention to issues related to pharmacogenomics and Medicare fraud. Recently, cases of suspected fraud have been identified that are related to genetic testing of Medicare patients. We are highlighting this information because it is relevant to both your pharmacy and your patients. These individuals may seek to take advantage of your patients or you, as a healthcare professional. The information provided should help you to be more aware and able to report suspected fraud.

We also want to remind you to take advantage of the third CE article, *Assistance Programs*

Available for Older Adults. This article highlights programs available to help your patients obtain services they may need, from nutrition to caregiver support. Not all of these programs require patients to be low income. If any of your patients might benefit from these services we encourage you to review the article so that you can provide knowledgeable recommendations when the time comes.

Once again, we thank you for your continued participation in our growing network.

Salisa Westrick, PhD
Sterling Professor
Health Outcomes Research and
Policy



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Welcome
- 2-3. Medicare Pearl Points
4. Featured Pharmacy Member
5. ADRC Spotlight
6. Network Members
7. Crossword Puzzle
8. New CE Article

Fraud in Pharmacogenomic Testing: Necessary or Not?

Kavon Diggs, PharmD Student

Pharmacogenomics is a relatively new field of study examining the affects of genes on a person's response to medications. Most medications are currently available as a "one size fits all" approach. But we know that they don't work the same way for every person. In recent years, pharmacogenomic testing has been on the uprise. It has been shown to be beneficial in determining for which patients a medication will be effective and which may have no response at all. Pharmacogenomic testing can also predict which patients might experience adverse drug reactions.¹



While beneficial, this testing can come at a high cost. According to the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Human and Health Services, Medicare pays on average \$6,000 to \$9,000 for these tests.² Genetic testing plays a vital role in determining the risk of developing certain diseases as well as screening and sometimes medical treatment. These high-risk conditions include: cystic fibrosis, hypothyroidism, sickle cell disease, and various types of cancers.³ The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will only cover testing for patients when it is determined to be medically necessary and approved by a physician treating the patient.⁴

The high cost and growing popularity of pharmacogenomic testing have created an environment of opportunity for individuals to commit fraud and take advantage of unsuspecting patients and providers. Scammers may claim to work for labs conducting the genetic testing, or even Medicare itself. These individuals imply that they can run the test, and inform the patient of conditions for which they may be at risk due to their genes. The scammers take patients' Medicare and Social Security Numbers, along with a swab of their cheek to collect DNA. They will then bill Medicare for the testing and often never report the results back to the patient. These individuals have been known to find their victims through social media, Craigslist, door knocking, and even setting up booths in conventions, grocery stores, senior centers, health fairs, and pharmacies offering gift cards and other rewards attempting to convince patients to agree to genetic testing.⁵

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General, there are precautions that can be taken to avoid these fraudulent schemes.⁶ It is recommended to advise your patients be suspicious of any claims for "free genetic testing" followed by requests for their Social Security or Medicare number.⁵ Also, never allow genetic testing to be conducted unless medically necessary and approved by a physician for the benefit of the patient's health.⁵

References

1. TDRInsider. Medicare Ends Coverage For Some Pharmacogenomic Test. <https://www.darkintelligencegroup.com/tdr-insider/medicare-ends-coverage-for-some-pharmacogenomic-testing/>. Accessed July 31, 2019.
2. Kaiser Health News. Genetic-Testing Scam Targets Seniors And Rips Off Medicare. <https://khn.org/news/genetic-testing-scam-targets-seniors-and-rips-off-medicare/>. Accessed July 31, 2019.
3. Mayo Clinic. Genetic Testing. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/genetic-testing/about/pac-20384827>. Accessed July 31, 2019.
4. Thomas B. "Genetic testing: the next big arena for fraud?". <https://www.statnews.com/2019/06/07/genetic-testing-fraud/>. Accessed July 31, 2019.
5. Services USDoHaH. Fraud Alert: Genetic Testing Scam. <https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/consumer-alerts/alerts/genetic scam.asp>. Accessed July 31, 2019.

Featured Pharmacy Network Member

Vernetta Myers, LPN

Pharmacy Services of Mobile



Featured: L-R-Supervising Pharmacist; Greg Mooere, RPH, Cameisha Washington, PT; Victoria Olsen, CPHT; Asiah Jackson, PT; Vernetta Myers, LPN; Sarah Smith, CPHT. Front Row: Tara Cowart, PT; Deborah Smith, CPHT & Byron Howell, RPH

Vernetta Myers is the Director of Marketing and Business Development at Pharmacy Services of Mobile, LLC. Vernetta is a Licensed Nurse, Pharmacy Technician and is MAS certified. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Government from the University of Mobile, and a Master of Education degree in Secondary Education in Teaching from the University of South Alabama. Vernetta spent some time working for Child Protective Services and

as an Assisted Living Administrator prior to beginning her term at Pharmacy Services of Mobile, LLC in 2012.

As Director of Marketing and Development, Vernetta has led Pharmacy Services of Mobile's involvement in the C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network. She was the first Pharmacy Services of Mobile employee to complete the C.A.R.E.S. Training and encouraged other staff members to follow suit. Vernetta and her team often refer Medicare patients who are in the donut hole, underinsured, or not insured at all. These referred patients are able to receive assistance in the form of subsidies if eligible, but also various other support services. Vernetta suggests keeping information on these resources available through the C.A.R.E.S. Network on hand for patients in need, "Listen to the needs of your patients. When patients are having difficulty paying for medications and other health services; even transportation or food, have resources available to offer to them and their family to get the care and assistance that they need." Vernetta and all of the staff at Pharmacy Services of Mobile are working hard to offer much needed resources to their customers, caregivers, and community.

ADRC Spotlight
Leisa Askew
AL Cares Coordinator



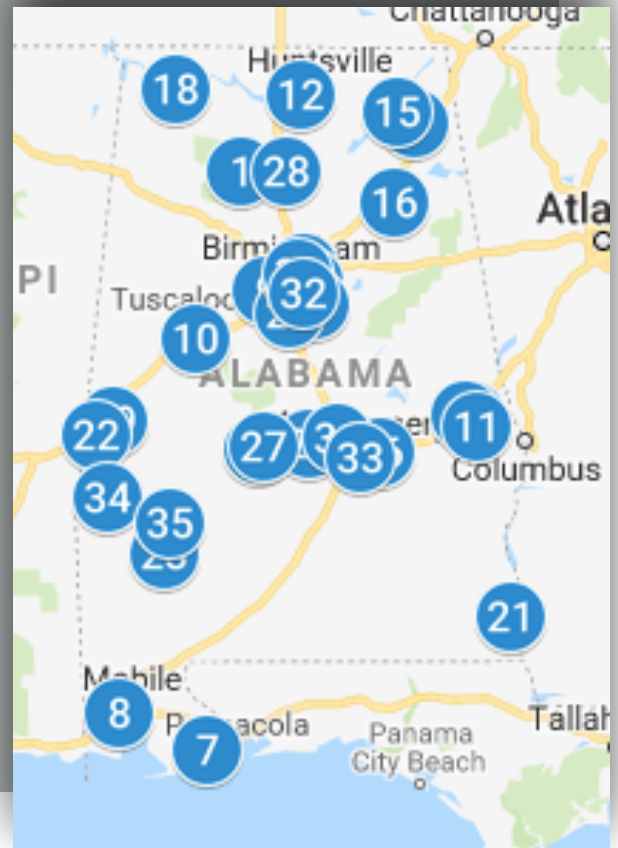
Leisa Askew graduated from Auburn University the spring of 1996 with a major in Social Work and double minor in Psychology and Sociology. She first began the nursing program, but due to a chain of life events, was directed into the social work field. Having a medical background through her early nursing experience was an asset during her career in social work. She sat for the Social Work Licensing exam and passed in May of 2002. Leisa worked at Wesley Terrace Retirement Community for five years as the Director of Social Services. That position led to an opportunity at Lee-Russell Council of Governments (LRCOG) as Aging Resource Specialist and Alabama Cares Coordinator, where Leisa has been serving the people of Lee and Russell counties for more than 18 years, since June of 2001.

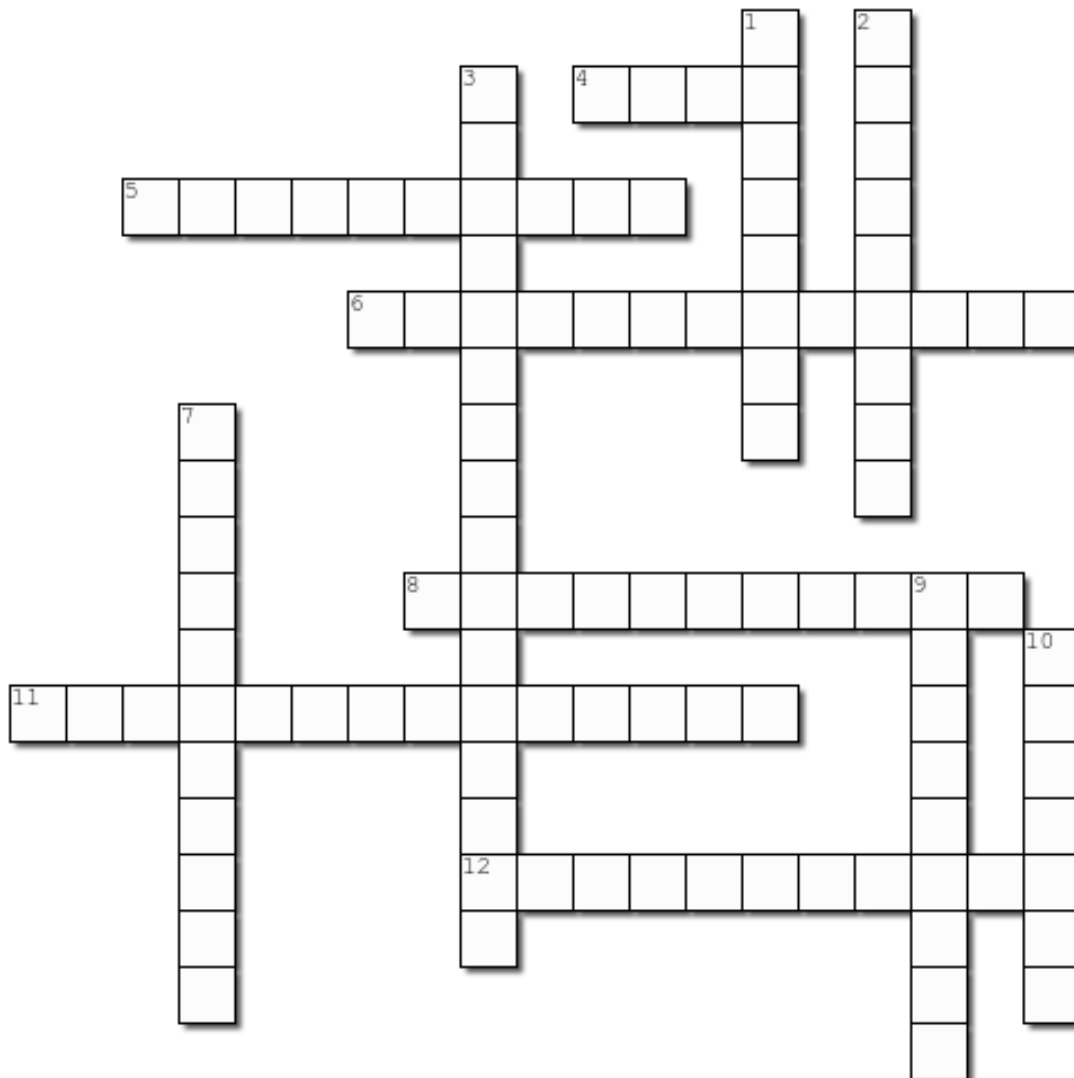
Leisa provides assistance to patients in the form of education, counseling, caregiver access assistance, caregiver respite, and caregiver supplemental service. One of her major roles includes field case management and arranging approved services in patients' homes. She teaches several aging classes each year, including dementia caregiving in the home, through the Auburn University Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

When asked why she wanted to become involved with LRCOG and what motivates her to continue with this work, Leisa says, "I have always had a special place in my heart for the older generation. When my grandparents started having age related issues, it was obvious that working with the older population was my calling. When dementia hit my family directly and I was able to navigate the care of my loved one in the home until his dying breath, I knew I had to continue the mission of helping other families as well. I knew then and there that recognizing dignity and respect for those living with dementia in my community was going to be a life mission, and 18 years later I have done just that. I hold several national dementia certifications and take great pride in the community education aspect of my job. The greatest joy and honor is going into a client's home when they have no hope and leaving my visit with a glimmer of hope and knowing they are not on the journey alone. I tell each client that we are all on a journey, the only difference is our chapters may look different. The end result is love, dignity, respect and hope. What an honor it is to be invited into something so personal and at times private with my clients and community. Each client is like an extended family member."

C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network Members

- 1) Addison Discount Pharmacy | Addison, AL
- 2) Kroger Pharmacy | Opelika, AL
- 3) Walgreens Pharmacy #6955 | Hueytown, AL
- 4) Rainsville Drugs | Rainsville, AL
- 5) Walmart Neighborhood Market | East University location, Auburn, AL
- 6) Walgreens Pharmacy #4589 | Pelham, AL
- 7) Lillian Pharmacy | Lillian, AL
- 8) Pharmacy Services of Mobile | Mobile, AL
- 9) Weldon Pharmacy | Hueytown, AL
- 10) Beauregard Drugs | Auburn, AL
- 11) Rite Aid Pharmacy #07054 | Madison, AL
- 12) Rite Aid Pharmacy #07013 | Birmingham, AL
- 13) Continuity of Care Internal Medicine Clinics- Brookwood Baptist Health | Birmingham, AL
- 14) Section Pharmacy | Section, AL
- 15) Gadsden City Pharmacy | Gadsden, AL
- 16) Fred's Pharmacy #3056 | Tuscumbia, AL
- 17) Walmart Pharmacy #4330 | Chelsea, AL
- 18) The Drug Store | Livingston, AL
- 19) Beasley Pharmacy | Columbia, AL
- 20) York Drug | York, AL
- 21) City Drugs | Grove Hill, AL
- 22) Walgreens Pharmacy #10525 | Tuscaloosa, AL
- 23) Walgreens Pharmacy #9427 | Pelham, AL
- 24) Winn-Dixie Pharmacy #0543 | Selma, AL
- 25) Autauga Pharmacy | Autaugaville, AL
- 26) Turenne PharMedCo | Montgomery, AL
- 27) Swift Drug Co. | Selma, AL
- 28) Borden Family Pharmacy | Cullman, AL
- 29) Walgreens #10333 | Birmingham, AL
- 30) Adams Drugs | Prattville, AL
- 31) Christ Health Center Pharmacy | Birmingham, AL
- 32) Walgreens Pharmacy #11651 | Birmingham, AL
- 33) Walgreens Pharmacy #9456 | Montgomery, AL
- 34) Willard's Medical Arts Pharmacy | Butler, AL
- 35) Family Medicine Pharmacy | Thomasville, AL





Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

4. ADVISE YOUR PATIENTS TO BEWARE OF ANY CLAIMS FOR _____ GENETIC TESTING.
5. OUR NEWLY AVAILABLE THIRD CE ARTICLE IS TITLE _____ PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR OLDER ADULTS.
6. PRIOR TO JOINING PHARMACY SERVICES OF MOBILE, VERNETTA MYERS WORKED AS AN ASSISTED LIVING _____.
8. BOTH PHARMACISTS AND PHARMACY _____ CAN RECEIVE FREE CE CREDIT THROUGH THE NEW CE ARTICLE.
11. GENETIC TESTING CAN HELP DETERMINE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING SOME CONDITIONS, INCLUDING _____.
12. LEISA ASKEW IS THE ALABAMA CARES _____ AT THE LEE-RUSSELL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS.

Down

1. LEISA ASKEW TEACHES _____ CAREGIVING COURSES THROUGH AUBURN UNIVERSITY'S OSHER LIFELONG LEARNING INSTITUTE.
2. GENETIC TESTING THAT IS BILLED TO MEDICARE BUT NOT _____ NECESSARY IS CONSIDERED FRAUD.
3. _____ IS THE FIELD OF STUDY EXAMINING THE AFFECT OF GENES ON A PERSON'S RESPONSE TO MEDICATIONS.
7. VERNETTA MYERS IS THE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND BUSINESS _____ FOR PHARMACY SERVICES OF MOBILE.
9. THE NEW CE ARTICLE OFFERS INFORMATION ON A NUMBER OF PROGRAMS YOUR PATIENTS MIGHT BENEFIT FROM, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY _____.
10. GENETIC TESTING CAN PREDICT WHICH PATIENTS MIGHT EXPERIENCE _____ DRUG REACTIONS.

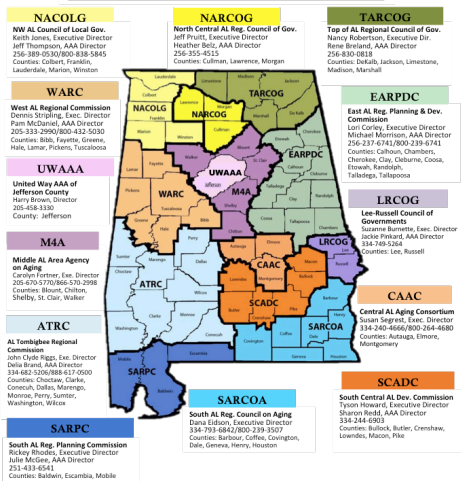
NEW CE Article Now Available!

In partnership with Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), the Harrison School of Pharmacy has developed a new ACPE approved one credit hour CE article available at no cost to you or your technician!

Assistance Programs Available for Older Adults

Many of your patients may struggle to afford not only their medications, but also basic needs like food and transportation. This CE Article provides pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with information surrounding the variety of services and support programs to address your patients' needs that are available through Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs).

Regional Planning Councils & Area Agency on Aging Contacts



ADRC Programs:

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

SenioRx

Elderly Nutrition Program

Senior Employment

Long Term Care Assistance Program

Caregiver Support

Legal Assistance

Long Term Care Ombudsman

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

After learning about these programs and their respective eligibility criteria, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will be able to request assistance on behalf of their patients and refer them to the local ADRC.

Access the CE article and complete the post-test and evaluation at:

<https://alpharmacycares.org/>

CROSSWORD KEY
ACROSS:
4. FREE
5. ASSISTANCE
6. ADMINISTRATOR
8. TECHNICIANS
11. HYPOTHYROIDISM
12. COORDINATOR
DOWN:
1. DEMENTIA
2. MEDICALLY
3. PHARMACOGENOMICS
7. DEVELOPMENT
9. NUTRITION
10. ADVERSE