

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

Issue 13



Please visit the C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network webpage at: <https://alpharmacycares.org/>

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Greetings C. A. R. E. S. Pharmacy Network Members! I can't believe Fall season has already come upon us already! Fall is usually a busy time for pharmacists and technicians with influenza vaccinations season and Medicare open enrollment happening (October 15-December 15). We want to keep encouraging you during this stressful time of year! We thank you for your continued participation in our growing network. Please make sure that you refer your patients to SHIP to get assistance with Medicare plan selection.

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You can contact SHIP directly by calling 1-800-age-line OR refer them to us using the referral cards. As always, if you need more referral cards and/or pre-stamped envelopes, please let us know.

In this issue, we highlight in the A.D.R.C. spotlight Valeri White, a Senior Program Coordinator, who's career has helped many elderly patients in the community and nursing home setting. You can learn more about her career and the impact she has on these patients on page 4. Also in this issue, we share how COVID-19 has made a major impact in mental health for the elderly population.

Finally, we bring to your attention how to protect yourself and others from potential fraud involving different medications.

Once again, we thank you for referring patients to us for thorough screening for benefits. A friendly reminder, pharmacists, technicians as well as patients can complete the training at

<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/continuing-education-program>

Salisa Westrick, PhD

Sterling Professor

Health Outcomes Research and Policy



Mental Health Services for Medicare Beneficiaries

Dharti Patel, Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy PharmD Candidate

Introduction

The mental health of our society has taken an injurious setback due to COVID-19. According to the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) in 2019, about 10% of adults, aged 18 years and older, experienced depressive and anxiety disorder symptoms between April-June.¹ Furthermore, the prevalence of mental illness among adults experiencing any mental illness was 18.57% or about 45 million people in 2020.² This high rate could be a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Behind the Elderly Population and Their Mental Health

The mental health of the elderly population was a concern during the pre-pandemic and the concern has been heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic this year. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that in 2017 approximately 15% of adults 60 years of age and older suffered from some type of mental disorder.³ Table 1 below shows percentages of patient-reported anxiety and depression symptoms in elderly patient.⁴

Table 1: Indicator of Anxiety or Depression Based on Reported Frequency of Symptoms⁴

Age	April- May 2020	May- June 2020
60-69 years old	24.9%	23.0%
70-79 years old	16.4%	18.2%
80 years older	14.6%	13.3%

Source: the U.S Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey 2020:Indicator of Anxiety or Depression Based on Reported Frequency of Symptoms

Why Should We Care?

Given a high percentage of older adults experiencing anxiety and depression symptoms, it is critical to discuss mental health services covered by Medicare. Medicare Part B covers outpatient visits to psychiatrists or other doctors, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, clinical nurse specialists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and lab tests ordered by a doctor.⁵ Medicare also offers telehealth services such as counseling for co-existing mental health disorder along with other circumstance.⁵ Medicare Advantage plans must cover the same services, offered by Medicare Part A and B. Taking advantages of these services could really make a real difference in Medicare population's mental health.

Conclusion

Because many of in the Medicare population seek assistance from pharmacists, pharmacists play a critical role in helping Medicare population, especially those with mental disorder. Many of Medicare population seek assistance from pharmacists. About 20% of the overall population or about one million people in Alabama are Medicare beneficiaries.⁶ Specifically, about 300,000 people with Medicare in Alabama enrolled in stand-alone Medicare part D plans in 2020.⁶ There are multiple ways pharmacists can employ to assist Medicare population in terms of mental health. For example, pharmacist can inform patients that they can call 1-800-Age-Line or go their state health insurance assistance programs (SHIP) if they need information about Medicare benefits.⁵ In addition, Pharmacist could also administer Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) screening test or have the test available in the pharmacy.⁷ Another way pharmacist can have a positive impact on patient with mental health illness is to make periodic telephone calls to keep in contact with these patient to check in with their progress, especially if the patients live alone.⁸ Taking these action could make all the difference in the long run with improving patient outcomes and customer loyalty.

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ADRC Spotlight**Valeri White***Senior Program Coordinator*

Valeri White is the Senior Program Coordinator for the City of Opelika. She is a 2005 graduate of Auburn University with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work. Her career has been focused on senior adults from managing Lifeline for East Alabama Medical Center (EAMC), working with Hospice of EAMC, and with Oak Park Retirement Community and Nursing Home.

She is currently finishing her second term on the Alabama Board of Social Work Examiners. During her time in the field, she saw the importance of connecting seniors to needed resources in our community and filling any gaps in services they may have. Through hospice, she learned that every moment is important and to live fully until the end. It also became clear that loneliness and a disconnect is detrimental to this population physically, mentally, and emotionally.

In her position, she is fortunate to not only encourage people to stay active through exercise but to encourage them to try new things and explore the world through travel (day trips and overnight trips). Creating a sense of community has been uplifting and is the foundation of our program.

Linking seniors to the pharmacy students and staff has given the elderly a caring team to connect with, as well as someone to ensure they feel empowered to inform their personal pharmacists and physicians of medications that don't work. The seniors love being seen as "helpers" to the students in their educational path and also give the students a perspective of the challenges and triumphs of the people across the counters from them.

Fraud Drug Schemes

Kavon Diggs, Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy PharmD Candidate

The spread of fraudulent drugs poses a serious danger to the public's health. While governments and international organizations put their efforts into curbing fake drug selling schemes, they continue to reemerge, particularly during the influenza season. In these circumstances, individuals should also take responsibility for their health, ensuring that they purchase only safe medications.

To combat the spread of counterfeit and substandard drugs, it is essential to educate the public on how to recognize these medicines. First of all, consumers should be aware that antiviral drugs used to treat flu illnesses are not sold without a prescription (US Food and Drug Administration, 2018). Some over-the-counter medicines can be used to reduce certain symptoms such as fever, but they cannot "cure" or "prevent" influenza, and FDA warns against buying products that make such promises (US Food and Drug Administration, 2018). For instance, fraudulent drugs' manufacturers may claim that their medicine can prevent catching flu without a vaccine, reduce the severity of the illness, or cure it fast (US Food and Drug Administration, 2018). Please advise your patients to be particularly careful when purchasing medications online. For example, online pharmacies that sell prescription drugs without a prescription or at reduced price are best to be avoided (US Food and Drug Administration, 2018). It is recommended to use only certified sellers with a licensed pharmacist available to answer questions (Bupa Global, n.d.). Following these rules, customers can ensure their safety while buying medications.

There are many fraudulent drug schemes that are widespread on the Internet. Some of them include selling counterfeit medications that are disguised as well-known products. To spot them, it is essential to check the packaging and the drugs carefully (Bupa Global, n.d.). Sometimes poor-quality or unusual packaging can indicate fraud (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017). For instance, the drugs may have different shape or color, or the packaging may miss expiry date (Interpol, n.d.).

Some researchers also advise avoiding several drugs marketed as relieving influenza symptoms such as Oscillocoquinum, Colloidal Silver, and Zinc (Radcliffe, 2018). Selling various kinds of homeopathic remedies is immensely facilitated by unsubstantiated news that suggests that vaccination is dangerous or unhelpful (Sanicas, 2018). Buying uncertified products that contain harmful ingredients or larger dosages of active ingredients can be more than just a waste of money – it may lead to serious health consequences.

Although the influenza season increases health anxiety in many individuals, it is during global pandemics when such schemes are particularly successful. For instance, a noticeable increase in selling and buying fake medicine was noted during the 2009 H1N1 virus pandemic (DeNoon, 2009). Another impetus to fraudulent medicine advertising was given by the COVID-19 pandemic. FDA warns against purchasing questionable products that are marketed as Coronavirus tests, treatments, and vaccines and claim to cure or prevent COVID-19 contagion (US Food and Drug Administration, 2020, April). The organization regularly updates the list of fraudulent Coronavirus medicine that is worth consulting with (US Food and Drug Administration, 2020, September).

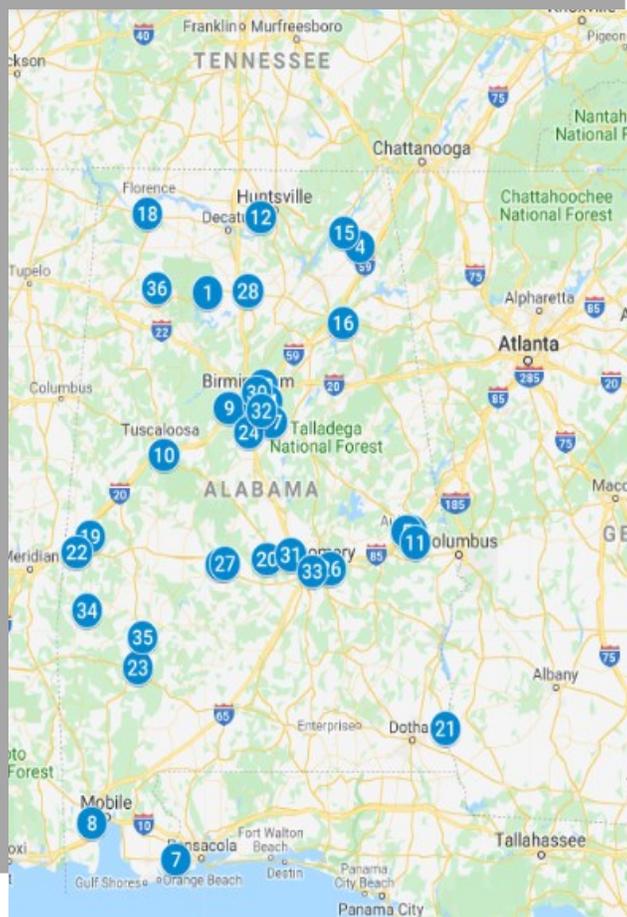
To conclude, while it is officials' responsibility to curb illegal medicine schemes, the public should also recognize the dangers associated with buying fraudulent products. It is particularly important these days, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people are increasingly anxious about their health. Being bombarded with unsubstantiated news, they may be misled by false promises made by dishonest manufacturers. Hence, pharmacists should be aware of the problem and help educate the public about how to protect themselves from the fraudulent schemes.

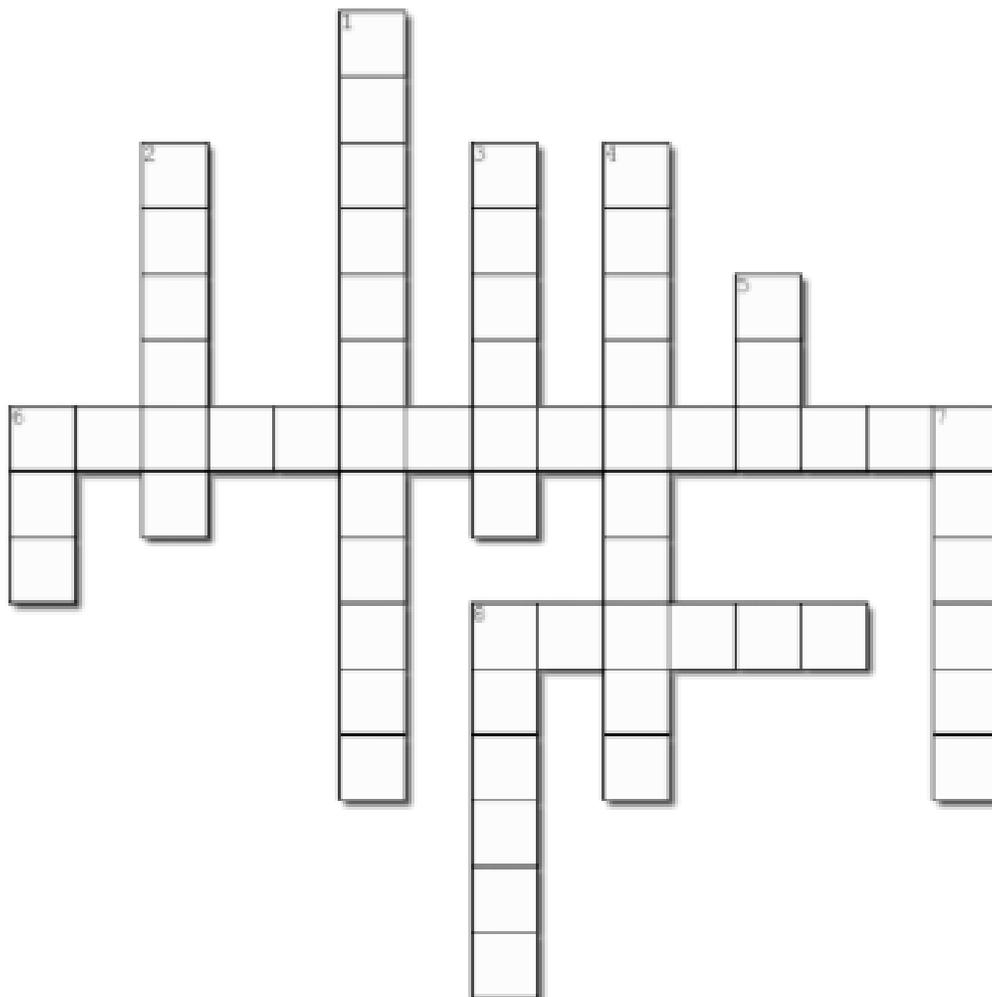
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C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network Members

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
36. Haley's Pharmacy | Haleyville, AL





Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

Across

- 6.** Manufacturers and sellers of fraudulent medicine use people's _____ marketing their goods (3 words)
- 8.** What part of Medicare covers outpatient visits to psychiatrists?

Down

- 1.** Who is the Senior Program Manager for the City of Opelika (full name)?
- 2.** The prevalence of _____ illness among adults experiencing any mental illness was 18.57% or about 45 million people in 2020.
- 3.** What type of pharmacies does the FDA recommend avoiding with reduced costs for prescriptions?
- 4.** A noticeable increase in selling and buying fake medicine was noted during the 2009 _____ pandemic (2 words).
- 5.** What organization reported that approximately 15% of adults 60 yrs of age and older suffered from a mental disorder?
- 6.** Who regularly updates the list of fraudulent Coronavirus medicines?
- 7.** What term is Valeri White finishing with the AL Board of Social Work?
- 8.** In addition to officials, who else should recognize the dangers associated with buying fraudulent products ?



REMINDER!

In partnership with Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), the C.A.R.E.S. program is partnering with the Harrison School of Pharmacy to offer an online video-based training and three ACPE approved 1-credit hour articles at no cost to you and your pharmacy technician!

1. Online Video Training :

Three-hour comprehensive program providing an overview of Medicare, the roles of ADRCs, and how to identify and refer patients to ADRCs using 8 online modules hosted on Auburn Ethos CE (see website address below).

2. Articles

Three one-hour home-study articles covering the following topics:

- *The Basics of Medicare for Pharmacy Personnel*
- *Pharmacists’ Role in Assisting Medicare Patients with Limited Income*
- *Assistance Programs Available for Older Adults*

Access all training programs at:

<https://aub.ethosce.com/>

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Across:

6. Fears and hopes

8. Part B

Down:

1. Valeri White

2. COVID-19 tests

3. Online

4. H1N1 Virus

5. WHO

6. FDA

7. Second

8. Public