American College of Clinical Pharmacy

Statement for the Record to the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

Medication Management in VA Healthcare

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The American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) appreciates the opportunity to provide the following statement for the record related to the December 3, 2025 U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (VA) hearing titled: *Medication Management in VA Healthcare*.

ACCP is a professional and scientific society that provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources enabling clinical pharmacists to achieve excellence in patient care practice and research. ACCP's membership is composed of over 16,000 clinical pharmacists, residents, fellows, students, scientists, educators and others who are committed to excellence in clinical pharmacy practice and evidence-based pharmacotherapy.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has been a leader in effectively utilizing the skills and talents of clinical pharmacists to the benefit of our veterans' health. In 2010, the VA established the Clinical Pharmacy Practice Office (CPPO) to advance access to services by these highly trained health professionals. In addition, the VA has fully integrated clinical pharmacists into its Patient-Aligned Care Teams (PACT), a leading model for providing patient-driven, personalized and team-based care to our veteran population.

Clinical pharmacists practice in a variety of healthcare settings including medical clinics, integrated health systems, hospitals, community-based pharmacies and others. In these settings, they work collaboratively with physicians and other providers to ensure that patients receive the best care possible. As medication experts, clinical pharmacists are regularly consulted by the healthcare team for specific recommendations about the appropriateness of prescription medicines and other aspects of medication therapy that their education and training have prepared them to address.

Comprehensive medication management (CMM) is a direct patient care service provided by clinical pharmacists working as formal members of the patient's health care team. CMM has been demonstrated to significantly improve patient outcomes and reduce harm caused by inappropriate medication use.[1]

The integration of Clinical Pharmacist Practitioners (CPPs) providing CMM within the VHA also helps address key drivers of burnout among health care team members and providers.

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[1] McFarland MS, Finks SW, Smith L, Buck ML, Ourth H, Brummel A; Medications Right Institute. Medication Optimization: Integration of Comprehensive Medication Management into Practice. Am Health Drug Benefits. 2021 Sep;14(3):111-114. PMID: 35261714; PMCID: PMC8845520.

In one of the largest and most comprehensive evaluations of the integration of clinical pharmacists into team-based care, VHA findings revealed that the clinical pharmacists positively impact drivers of burnout, reinforcing past research.[2]

VA National Pharmacogenomics Program

Pharmacogenomics (PGx) is the study of how a patient's genetic profile determines their responses to specific medications. When integrated into CMM, PGx testing allows for targeted treatment decisions based on the unique characteristics of the patient's unique genetic profile.

ACCP applauds VHA's recognition of the unique value that qualified clinical pharmacists provide in leveraging advanced technologies to the treatment and therapy of complex conditions. As medication therapies and genomics continue to evolve, programs like Pharmacogenomics testing for Veterans (PHASER) will help advance unique, precise and personalized approaches to medication therapies.

Clinical Pharmacy, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorder

ACCP is committed to advancing an individualized, patient-centered approach to patient care that considers patient variability in physiology, drug metabolism and other underlying medical conditions. Given the role that opioid medications play in pain management and opioid use disorder, clinical pharmacists have both an opportunity and an obligation to participate in the care of patients by promoting rational pharmacotherapy of opioids and multimodal analgesia and enhancing access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (mOUD) or Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT).

As communities across the country struggle to respond to the opioid epidemic, a comprehensive strategy must be prioritized that appropriately integrates clinical pharmacists - the health professionals best suited to optimize medication use – into teams caring for these patients. Medication optimization is critical to a comprehensive patient-centered approach to management of pain and other chronic conditions. Clinical pharmacists are essential team members in a modern, interprofessional approach to acute and chronic pain.

Clinical pharmacists provide direct patient care as part of interprofessional teams across a variety of practice settings. The VA's PACTs include primary care providers (PCPs), nurses, and other clinicians, including clinical pharmacists and advanced practice nurses working

[2] McFarland MS, Ourth H, Boggle D. Evaluation of team experience with the clinical pharmacist practitioner providing comprehensive medication management in the Veterans Health Administration. J Gen Intern Med. DOI 10.1007/s11606-025-09920-w

collaboratively to implement individualized care plans for patients with complex, chronic conditions including chronic pain and mental health disorders. Pharmacists at the VA are also involved in innovative team-based approaches to MOUD or MAT. As a part of their work, VA pharmacists are now incorporating pain management into their training programs for pharmacy students and residents, preparing the next generation of healthcare providers to better manage these conditions.

Optimizing Medications Through Telehealth: Protecting Veteran Access to Telemedicine Services Act of 2025

The widespread adoption of telehealth has demonstrated[3] its long-term value, particularly for patients with mobility issues and those in rural and/or medically underserved areas. To ensure the broadest possible patient access and the highest quality of care, we urge Congress to pass H.R.1107 – the Protecting Veteran Access to Telemedicine Services Act of 2025. This legislation will improve healthcare accessibility, convenience, and efficiency by enabling remote consultations, reducing travel requirements, and facilitating timely medical interventions.

Conclusion

There is convincing evidence that Clinical Pharmacy Practitioners (CPPs) in the VA improve access, clinical outcomes, and cost effectiveness when properly deployed for direct patient care. It is critical to note that increasing access to clinical pharmacy services through the VA's PACTs could serve as a solution to unburdening primary care providers by reducing primary care provider revisit rates.[4] We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information, data, and connections to successful practices that provide comprehensive medication management (CMM) and pharmacogenomics services as part of an effort to optimize the use of medications for America's veterans.

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[3] Thomas AM, Baker JW, Hoffman TJ, et al. Clinical pharmacy specialists providing consistent comprehensive medication management with increased efficacy through telemedicine during the COVID19 pandemic. J Am Coll Clin Pharm. 2021;4:934-938. doi: 10.1002/jac5.1494.

[4] McFarland MS, Nelson J, Ourth H, et al. Optimizing the primary care clinical pharmacy specialist: Increasing patient access and quality of care within the Veterans Health Administration. J Am Coll Clin Pharm. 2020;3:494-500. doi 10.1002/jac5.1177