ADVOCACY ISSUE BRIEF

Psychiatric Pharmacists: A Leading Solution to the Behavioral Health Workforce Shortage

Patients Living With Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Have Complex Medical Needs Leading to...

2-3X higher mortality rate with **60%** of early mortality due to inadequately treated medical conditions[1]

Higher risk of cardiovascular disease and related death[2]

Medications that can **cause or exacerbate** some medical conditions[3]

More concomitant medications and co-occurring conditions[3]

Frequent medication non-adherence costing **$30 billion annually** in additional health expenditures[4]

Medication non-optimization leading to a cost of over **$500 billion annually** in additional health expenditures[5]

THE MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER (SUD) WORKFORCE NEED IS GREAT

Only **46.2%** of people living with a mental illness in the U.S. received treatment in the past year[6]

Only **5.7%** of people with both a mental illness and SUD received treatment for both disorders[6]

Only **11.2%** of the **2.5 million** Americans with opioid use disorder (OUD) received medication treatment in 2020[6]

By 2024, the psychiatrist shortage is projected to be between **14,280** and **31,091**[7]

By 2030, the projected shortage of adult psychiatrists is estimated to exceed **12,000**[8]

In 2023, **21%** of psychiatric residency slots went unmatched[9]

Psychiatric Pharmacists Are Part of the Behavioral Health Workforce Solution

Psychiatric pharmacists have specialized training and expertise in pharmacology, pharmacokinetics, pharmacogenomics, patient communication, and managing patients with mental illness and multiple chronic conditions[10]. Psychiatric pharmacists...

- Are highly trained with 6-8 years undergraduate and Doctor of Pharmacy degrees
- Are frequently residency trained and board certified in psychiatric pharmacy, holding the BCPP credential
- Work on health care teams with psychiatrists and other health professionals[11]
- Provide Comprehensive Medication Management (CMM) that focuses on medication optimization of all conditions to meet treatment goals
- Increase access to care while also decreasing wait times for appointments with medical providers such as psychiatrists, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners

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Congress Must Take Action to Remove Barriers In Access to Psychiatric Pharmacists

- Require CMS to recognize psychiatric pharmacists as qualified health care providers under Medicare
- Make Comprehensive Medication Management (CMM) a covered service under Medicare
- Require CMMI to study the impact of medication optimization via CMM
- Require CMS to allow pharmacists to serve as the psychiatric expert in the Collaborative Care Model (CoCM) that integrates mental health (MH) and substance use disorder (SUD) care and treatment into primary care
- Include psychiatric pharmacists in HRSA training programs and National Health Service Corp student loan repayment programs
- Require CMS to provide financial support of psychiatric pharmacy residencies in order to grow the profession more rapidly

FACT: CMM Results In

- Better care
- Reduced costs
- Improved access to care
- Improved provider work life
- Improved patient satisfaction
- Improved outcomes
- Improved quality of care

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Values Psychiatric Pharmacists[12]

The VHA employs 11,337 clinical pharmacists with 5,964 (52.6%) of those serving as Clinical Pharmacist Practitioners (CPP). These CPPs operate under a scope of practice that allows them to serve as direct care providers with prescriptive authority. The role of the CPP has grown as a core interprofessional team member that improves access and quality through the provision of comprehensive medication management (CMM) services. In FY2023...

VA Veterans Health Administration

- **583 CPPs** Practice in MH at VA Facilities
- **82 Residents** Complete a VA Psychiatric Pharmacy Residency
- **484,975** Patient Encounters Are Provided by MH CPPs
- **250,000+** Patient Encounters Are Delivered Virtually by MH CPPs to Patients in Remote Areas
- Controlled substance prescriptive authority by pharmacists continues to grow with **164 MH CPPs** currently meeting this growing need
- **100% of MH CPPs** apply the principles of team-based care and population management to identify patients who could benefit from CMM services to improve access to care, quality, and safety

The American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists (AAPP) is a professional association representing psychiatric pharmacists nationwide. Our members integrate into teams of health care professionals, making a difference in overall costs, treatment efficiencies, patient recovery, and quality of life.

References available at: https://aapp.org/advocacy/workforce

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