



August 23, 2017

Pamela Foote
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Dear Ms. Foote:

The College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP) is pleased that the Department of Health and Human Services has established the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee to address serious mental illness (SMI) and serious emotional disturbance (SED). We appreciate the opportunity to provide public comment for the inaugural meeting on August 31, 2017. We believe that psychiatric pharmacists are an important part of the solution to improving access, quality, and cost of behavioral health care.

CPNP is a professional association of more than 2,200 members who envision a world where all individuals living with mental illness, including those with substance use and neurologic disorders, receive safe, appropriate, and effective treatment. Most members are specialty pharmacists and Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacists (BCPPs) who specialize in psychiatry, addiction, psychopharmacology, and neurology. CPNP's mission is to advance the reach and practice of psychiatric pharmacy and serve as the voice of the specialty.

Psychiatric pharmacists are residency-trained, board certified pharmacists who are experts in the safe and effective use of medications used in the treatment of SMI. Psychiatric pharmacists work collaboratively with other members of the health care team to optimize drug therapy, including the assessment of treatment effectiveness, side effects, drug interactions, and adherence.

Patients cared for by an interprofessional team that includes a psychiatric pharmacist benefit from the pharmacist's unique skill set that complements other members of the team. Psychiatric pharmacists focus on optimizing the use of all medications including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and supplements, to ensure that they are appropriate, effective, safe, and can be taken as intended. Psychiatric pharmacists work in inpatient, outpatient, primary care, and psychiatric care settings. They provide direct patient care, including medication management for a full range of conditions, including psychiatric and other medical conditions. Treatment teams can also benefit from having a psychiatric pharmacist as a resource for consultations, drug information, and for providing medication education for the patient and the patient's caregivers. Psychiatric pharmacists also promote preventative health care, medication adherence, and lifestyle modification.

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With a significant psychiatric workforce shortage in the United States, adding psychiatric pharmacists to the health care team increases the capacity of the system to care for more patients with psychiatric and substance use disorders¹. Patients with SMI often die years younger than their peers due to multiple concomitant medical conditions. The addition of pharmacists to the team is an integral part of addressing the optimal use of all medications to improve patient outcomes. Psychiatric pharmacists can help with improvements in patient symptoms, increased medication adherence rates, increased patient satisfaction, and the potential to reduce health care costs².

Pharmacists are the most underutilized healthcare professionals in the United States. Adding psychiatric pharmacists to the interprofessional team can improve outcomes, increase access to care, and be part of the solution in addressing the workforce shortage.

Sincerely,

Deanna Kelly, PharmD, BCPP
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References:

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2. Goldstone LW, DiPaula BA, Caballero J, Park SH, Price C, Slater MZ. Improving medication-related outcomes for patients with psychiatric and neurologic disorders: value of psychiatric pharmacists as part of the health care team. *Ment Health Clin* [Internet]. 2015;5(1):1-28. DOI: 10.9740/mhc.2015.01.001.)