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Pharmacist-managed Clinic Improves Anemia, Reduces Expenditures

A pharmacist-managed medication therapy clinic for anemic patients helped reduce patients' medications, cutting the clinic's expenditures by an estimated \$116,541 annually for 35 patients, according to an August 1, 2008 study in the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy.¹ The program is conducted at the Erie Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which serves northwest Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and southwest New York.

Before the clinic was established, only 2 of 49 patients (4%) using red blood cell-stimulating medications met the medical centers' drug-use criteria. Six months after the clinic was implemented, 27 of the 29 patients (93%) were in compliance with the medical center's drug-use criteria.

Patients who were beginning to or already taking these medications were referred to the clinic by their physician. At the clinic, the pharmacist checked that the patient had the necessary laboratory tests to determine what was causing the patient's anemia. After receiving a patient's test results, the pharmacist determined whether the patient should receive the drug therapy and at what dose. Patients were referred to a nurse who checked the patient's blood pressure and administered the drug. The pharmacist was authorized to order laboratory tests for patient monitoring. If the pharmacist determined the drug therapy was not appropriate, the patient was referred back to the physician. Anemic patients also received oral iron supplements, which improved patients' iron stores and helped reduce the amount of medications patients took.

1. Clapp SE, Bardo JA, Chrymko MM. Implementation of a pharmacist-managed clinic for patients receiving erythropoietin-stimulating agents. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm.* 2008; 65: 1458-63. A copy of the full study is available at

http://www.ashp.org/s_ashp/docs/files/advocacy/policy_alert/AJHP_Pharmacist-managed_Clinic_8_01_08.pdf

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ASHP Health Policy Alerts are synopses of new studies highlighting the medication-use process in health care, especially studies assessing contemporary pharmacists' role in improving medication-use outcomes. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists encourages recipients to keep a copy of this synopsis for future reference.

