

October 2, 2008

## Pharmacists Reduce VTE-related Hospital Costs, Increase Patient Days of Medication Therapy

---

A pharmacist-led program to assess hospital patients for venous thromboembolism (VTE) prevented about \$450,000 in hospital expenses during the first seven months of the program, according to a September 1, 2008, study in the *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*.<sup>1</sup> The program is conducted at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital, a 278-bed, not-for-profit facility serving patients in St. Louis and areas of southern Illinois.

Six months into the program, Saint Elizabeth's Hospital tripled the number of patient days of VTE medication therapy (from 808 patient days before the program began to 2,333 patient days six months later). During the same period, the rate of hospital discharges in which deep venous thrombosis occurred fell from 1.1% of discharges before the program began to 0.1% of discharges six months after the program started.

Under the program, a pharmacist assesses newly admitted patients for their risk of developing VTE, noting if there is such a risk in the patient's record. Drug therapy to prevent VTE is recommended for high- to highest-risk patients. The program excludes maternity, nursery, pediatric, and psychiatric patients.

Saint Elizabeth's program is maintained by one pharmacist per day, seven days a week, who spends an average of four hours each day reviewing admissions, assessing patient's risk of developing VTE, and making drug therapy recommendations in patients' charts. The program is reviewed quarterly to assess if it is meeting the hospital's goals.

Bauer JB, Chun DS, Karpinski TA. Pharmacist-led program to improve venous thromboembolism prophylaxis in a community hospital. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm*. 2008; 65: 1643-7. A copy of the full study is available at

[http://www.ashp.org/s\\_ashp/docs/files/advocacy/policy\\_alert/AJHP\\_VTE\\_9\\_01\\_08.pdf](http://www.ashp.org/s_ashp/docs/files/advocacy/policy_alert/AJHP_VTE_9_01_08.pdf)

---

To View ASHP's Policy Alert Archive click <http://www.ashp.org/policy-alert>.

Questions about ASHP Health Policy Alerts can be directed to Lisa Daigle, policy analyst, at (301) 664-8651 or [ldaigle@ashp.org](mailto:ldaigle@ashp.org).

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.

