



Best Practice:

# Medical Social Worker Track



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## **Medical Social Worker Track: Focus on Medication Management**

Patient's and/or caregiver's ability to manage medications is a crucial component to helping the patient self-manage. Medication management issues are frequently compounded by lack of financial resources to pay for medications and/or need for increased caregiver support. A recent study of community dwelling older people receiving home care, suggests that **64% made medication errors** (DeBartolomeo, et.al.). Medication mismanagement can lead to additional problems, including hospitalizations. Medical social workers can help promote patient medication safety by enlisting caregiver and community support to help the patient safely manage all aspects of their care in their home, including medications.



### **MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER**

#### **CHECKLIST:**

##### **Do you:**

- Participate in case conferences when patient nonadherence medication issues are discussed?
- Receive referrals to assist patient with financial support for medications?
- Assist clinicians in determining underlying non-adherence issues (financial, other)?
- Receive referrals to evaluate patients for signs/symptoms depression and/or high risk behaviors?
- Share information on local community resources with clinicians?
- Encourage the patient/caregiver in health care goal setting?
- Receive referrals to assist patient with caregiver support to improve ability to manage medications?
- Provide education to other disciplines on what social workers can do to help patients maintain independence in home?
- Know the home care agency's medication reconciliation process?
- Receive referrals for emotional issues related to medication non-adherence (fear of addiction, drug diversion or overmedicating or health beliefs and expectations)?

#### **INSIGHTS**

Use a **patient-centered approach** to medication teaching—teach patients to be their own advocate so they ‘carry’ an accurate list of medication.

Susan Ambrosy, Quality Manager  
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**Polypharmacy:** the use of multiple medications to treat a host of medical conditions, contributes to medication adverse events (Arcangelo).

**Potential Inappropriate Medications In Older Adults (PIMs)** (New Jersey Drug Safety Initiative): PIMs are medications that should generally be avoided in the elderly because the risks associated with their use may outweigh the benefits. Older adults are generally more sensitive to drugs with central nervous system (CNS) and/or anticholinergic side effects. Side effects may develop in those who have previously tolerated therapy.