

Reducing Medication Errors In Long Term Care Facilities – Safe Medication Practices

Since the Coalition's first initiative related to inpatient medication practices, the evidence has become increasingly available showing the impact of medication errors on patients in long term care facilities. In response to this, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Prevention of Medical Errors collaborated with MassPRO and the Massachusetts Extended Care Foundation and received funding from the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety and Medical Error Reduction (directed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health) to develop, in 2005, the Reduction in Medication Errors in Long Term Care Facilities Project. The primary aim of this initiative was to develop the tools needed by the staff in long-term care facilities to assess current medication systems, make key improvements and monitor ongoing medication safety. These aims should reduce the incidence of medication errors in this vulnerable population.

The project confirmed the importance of reconciling medications and warfarin management as priority medication safety issues in long term care. It also identified the significant opportunity for medication errors due to the monthly editing process. Project staff developed and distributed strategies to help reduce these errors from the monthly editing process to include in the final workbook, which consists of a series of sections related to the systems directly impacting medical error rates.

- **Workbook Developed**

- The Workbook is a step by step guide for long-term care staff that is expected to contribute to a reduction in the incidence of medication errors and adverse drug events. The workbook includes information on safe practices for prescribing, ordering, monitoring, administering and dispensing medications in the long-term care setting.
 - *Safe Medication Practices Workbook Introduction*
 - *Safe Medication Practices Workbook Table of Contents*
 - *Safe Medication Practices Workbook*

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