

Minimizing Medication Errors

The primary purpose of the Negley Awards is to elicit information from clinicians and behavioral health centers about extraordinary and quality practice to share with other organizations with the ultimate goal of facilitating quality care improvement.

This year we request submissions about minimizing medication errors. We have identified the specific information requested to correspond with the patterns of allegations that recur in real lawsuits. You may describe your actual current practice or a new design of systems you intend to put in place.

For this submission please provide copies of all your relevant forms, policies and other documents and describe your practice and systems to reduce the risk of medication errors. We will consider all aspects of your risk management efforts when evaluating your submission. We are especially interested in your approach to:

1. providing patients with the most up to date information about each medication prescribed,
2. determining that the patient understands the issues relevant to each medication and is capable of informed consent,
3. obtaining and documenting adequate informed consent,
4. obtaining and documenting the baseline data needed for each medication,
5. adequately monitoring patients in accordance with the guidelines for specific medications,
6. training direct care staff to monitor patient reactions to medication and reporting relevant developments to the prescriber,
7. helping prescribers consider all relevant factors when deciding on a specific medication and documenting their reasoning in selecting the specific medication,

8. documenting the entire prescription and monitoring process in a format that is readily available to all future staff who need the information and,

9. auditing prescription documentation.

For additional information on risk management concerning potential medication errors please see the risk management video “Quality care, risk management and avoiding medication errors” available at [MHRRG.com](http://www.mhrrg.com). The video and materials were previously given to all Mental Health Risk Retention Group insureds. Further, Mental Health Corporations of America (MHCA) has posted on its website various suggested forms relevant to the specific issues addressed in this request for submissions. You may review them at the following address: <http://www.mhca.com/Public/MedError-RiskMgmt-Intro.asp>

Industry Findings

The most frequent professional liability claims made against community behavioral health centers are in the areas of sexual misconduct, patient violence, suicide and medication errors. These areas of practice thus present the highest risk to the behavioral health care provider for legal exposure and to the patient for injury.

Lawsuits against behavioral health care providers for medication errors consistently allege, among other things, two deficiencies in care. First, plaintiffs allege a failure to adequately warn the patient about known risks associated with the medication being prescribed. Second, plaintiffs claim failures to obtain sufficient baseline information about the patient’s condition and history and failure to update the baseline information and monitor the patient.

As to warning of known risks, each medication has unique side effects and what we know about those risks

changes as patients use the medication over time and as additional research is completed. Thus it is prudent to have a system in place to keep up to date with new information that becomes available about medication risks and a way to warn patients about the risks of each and every medication prescribed. Further it is appropriate to consistently determine whether the patient actually understands the risks and is capable of providing informed consent. A way to be sure patients are given the information they need is to provide an up to date informed consent document for each prescription and to document the specifics of conversations about the risks of and alternatives to the proposed medication.

As to obtaining adequate information needed to select the correct medication, each prescription requires the availability of different information about the patient in order to make an informed judgment. For instance published clinical standards for the prescription of Zyprexa provide that clinicians consider the patient’s history to include symptoms, lab reports and examinations related to diabetes, fasting blood glucose, oral glucose tolerance tests, family history of diabetes and obesity, eating habits, nutritional status, weight, exercise habits, and other medications taken which may affect glucose levels. Further the standards advise the prescriber to determine whether the patient has risk factors for atherosclerosis and to complete an in-depth physical exam to include among other things height, weight, waist circumference, body mass index and blood pressure. Recommended lab tests are fasting plasma glucose and fasting lipid profile. Clinicians are further advised to monitor the above items periodically.

It is prudent for the prescriber to consider a variety of factors when deciding on each prescription including the diagnosis, the severity of symptoms, level of functioning currently, in response to past medications and different doses, drug interactions, side effects, alternative medication and treatment, patient preference, medication compliance history, co-morbidities, and cost and availability of medication. Additionally it is best to document both consideration of these and other relevant factors and the clinician’s reasoning for the medication selection.



2010 Negley Awards Application
Topic - Minimizing Medication Errors
Please complete both sides of this form.

Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____

Key personnel: _____

Chief Executive Officer: _____

Program Manager: _____

Board Chairman (or President): _____

It is agreed that all submissions become the property of the Mental Health Risk Retention Group, Inc. and will be used in the Company's loss prevention program in its discretion including but not limited to publication of the materials submitted.

APPLICANT CORPORATE NAME: _____

By _____ Title _____

Date signed: _____

Please complete both sides of this form. On a separate sheet, provide a brief description of the history and scope of your organization (limit 200 words). Attach the description and this agreement to narrative and send 15 copies by Friday, **November 13, 2009** to:

2010 Negley Awards
Mental Healthcare America
1876-A Eider Court, Tallahassee, FL 32308

Judging Criteria

Programs submitted will be scored based on evidence of the following:

- Availability of data to demonstrate that the intervention or practice has successfully impacted the targeted area of liability exposure for the organization
- Availability of data to demonstrate that the intervention or practice has improved the organization's overall quality of care
- Degree to which the intervention or practice is likely to reduce future liability exposure
- Degree to which the intervention or practice demonstrates adherence to best practice standards, as applicable
- Degree to which the intervention or practice demonstrates a new or creative way of assuring adherence to relevant best practices or otherwise adds to the general knowledge in the field
- Ease with which the intervention or practice could be duplicated in other behavioral health settings

NEGLEY
ASSOCIATES
UNDERWRITING MANAGERS

A brief history of the Negley Awards . . .

The Negley Awards were established in 1990 by Negley Associates, underwriting managers for the Mental Health Risk Retention Group. The Awards recognize and reward outstanding achievements in risk management by community behavioral health centers. Winners share their risk management strategies with other behavioral health centers thereby enlightening the greater community. Since the award program's inception, in excess of one-quarter million dollars have been awarded to deserving applicants.



Application Process

Application deadline is **November 13, 2009**. Applicants must be either (1) a shareholder in the Mental Health Risk Retention Group (MHRRG), (2) a member of Mental Health Corporations of America, Inc. (MHCA), or (3) a member of the National Council.

Application essays may not exceed five typed pages, single-sided, double-spaced on standard letter size paper, text size no smaller than 10 pt. Each organization is limited to one entry per year. President's Award Winner in the previous year is not permitted to apply. Send fifteen (15) copies of the application to 2009 Negley Awards, Mental Healthcare America, 1876-A Eider Court, Tallahassee, FL 32308.

Applications will be reviewed and three winning applications selected by the MHRRG Board of Directors whose decision is final. Three unrestricted cash awards are made: a \$10,000 President's Award, a \$5,000 Chairman's Award, and a \$5,000 Directors' Award.

Winners will present their programs in Clearwater Beach, Florida at MHCA's Winter Conference to be held February 23-26, 2010. They will present a second time, and awards will be presented at the Annual Conference of the National Council to be held March 15-17 in Orlando, Florida. Finalists will receive up to \$1,500 to offset the cost of travel expenses to the two conferences.

As a condition of *all entries*, organizations agree that their submissions may be shared among others in the industry at no cost by way of printed or electronic magazine, newspaper or newsletter articles, press releases and verbal presentations. Any names, dates or places should be changed to protect the privacy of clients or individuals as this report/case history will become public information. Centers under the direction of MHRRG Board members are ineligible to participate.

Excellence
in
Risk Management

The Negley
Awards
2010

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