

HC Spectrum[®]



A newsletter created especially for healthcare professionals using home care services, delivering a mix of news and trends in healthcare and up-to-date information about our clinical programs and services



Through Rain, Sleet, or Snow – Delivering Patient Care When Emergencies Strike

Walgreens-OptionCare delivers quality care no matter what the conditions. Here's a brief rundown of some extraordinary emergencies that required team effort and patient commitment.

Ice Storm – Oklahoma City, 2007

Last December, a winter storm coated Oklahoma and its neighboring states with a dangerous layer of ice, causing at least 27 deaths and leaving more than 600,000 homes and businesses without electricity, some for as long as 10 days. Through it all, the Walgreens-OptionCare staff in Oklahoma City was diligently tending to patients. If patients were temporarily relocating, the staff made sure the patients had adequate medical supplies and, if needed, arranged for continued care at their destination. Because the ice made roads treacherous, safe delivery of supplies was a constant concern. “Our

drivers were out servicing patients despite the hazardous driving conditions,” said Tami Maine, general manager of the Oklahoma City facility.

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Wildfires – California, 2007

Several Walgreens-OptionCare patients living in Southern California temporarily left their homes when wildfires broke out in the region last fall. Craig Fischer, general manager of the Walgreens-OptionCare facility in San Diego, said much of his staff's efforts went toward contacting patients and getting them the care and supplies they needed at their new location. “We were able to track down every patient and transfer their care to our other facilities near them,” said Fischer. “All of our offices really stepped up.”

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Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita – Houston, 2005

After donating medical equipment and helping provide medical care for Hurricane Katrina evacuees, the Houston office of Walgreens-OptionCare had to turn its attention and efforts to preparing patients for the impending threat of Hurricane Rita. The staff began implementing its emergency protocols—calling patients by priority and coordinating delivery of backup supplies of oxygen tanks, batteries, enteral nutrition products, and other medical necessities. “We got all of our patients’ supplies delivered in time,” said Bill Guthrie, regional operations manager. “Our drivers did an incredible job.”

Home Care Happenings

Resources Available from Clinical Nutrition Week

Walgreens-OptionCare presented six clinical posters at Clinical Nutrition Week in Chicago last month:



Walgreens-OptionCare staff talk with attendees of ASPEN's Clinical Nutrition Week conference in Chicago.

- Automated Pediatric Growth Chart Spreadsheet Calculations—A Validation Study
- Conservative Guidelines Result in Successful Therapy for Home Parenteral Nutrition Patients at Risk for Refeeding Syndrome
- Management of an Oncology Home-Start Parenteral Nutrition Patient with Egg Allergy
- Case Study: Recognition and Management of Undiagnosed Diabetes in a Home-Start TPN Patient
- The Utilization of a Micronutrient Questionnaire as a Nutritional Assessment
- Unique Circumstances for Precious Cargo: A Logistics Challenge in Pediatric Enteral Therapy

In addition, Sue Tapp, MS, RD, LD, CDE, regional dietitian for Walgreens-OptionCare, presented a lecture on “Enteral Nutrition for the Consumer with ALS: RD Interventions

and Resources.” For a copy of the posters or presentation, contact your account manager or e-mail homecare@walgreens.com.

HC Spectrum Q&A

Q. Do you take self-pay and indigent patients?

A. Yes, we will work with individuals who cannot afford to pay for their therapy or medication. We require the patient to complete a form for consideration and, when approved, payments are agreed upon prior to providing service. Payment reduction or complete removal of the fees will depend upon the degree of hardship.



Legislative Corner

Medicare Considers Home Diagnosis of Sleep Apnea

Medicare is weighing a proposal to cover sleep apnea treatment for seniors diagnosed with home testing kits. Currently, Medicare only approves treatment for those diagnosed in a sleep lab. But with the availability of less costly and more convenient home testing devices, Medicare issued a proposal last December to consider approving home diagnosis. The decision could have a significant impact on independent and hospital-run sleep labs. It is estimated that home tests cost about 35 percent less than an overnight test at a sleep lab, which can run between \$650 and \$800. Some argue, however, that home testing units are not as reliable as diagnosis in a sleep lab. A final decision is expected sometime this month.

Joint Commission Releases Proposed 2009 Patient Safety Goals

The Joint Commission in January released its proposed 2009 National Patient Safety Goals (NPSGs) for review. Among the proposed goals are safety requirements related to patient identification, safe use of medications, and patient involvement in care. Perhaps most noteworthy is a goal aimed at stemming drug-resistant organism infections in hospitals, specifically methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and *Clostridium difficile*-associated disease (CDAD). The goal includes the measurement and monitoring of infection rates; education for healthcare workers, patients, and caregivers; lab-based alert systems for identifying new MRSA patients; and a CDAD surveillance system. Final approval of the 2009 NPSGs is expected in late spring. For a complete look at the proposed goals, go to www.jointcommission.org.

FDA News

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved **Tysabri**[®] for the treatment of moderate-to-severe Crohn's disease in patients with evidence of inflammation who have had an inadequate response to, or are unable to tolerate, conventional Crohn's disease therapies. As with the multiple sclerosis indication for this drug, Tysabri is available only through a special restricted-distribution program in which patients must enroll.

Tysabri increases the chance of getting a rare but serious brain infection called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML). Prescribers are required to educate patients on the benefits and risks of treatment with Tysabri, and both prescriber and patient must fill out a Tysabri enrollment form. The prescriber must evaluate the patient periodically and report any serious, atypical infections to the FDA and to either Biogen Idec or Elan, the manufacturer and distributor of Tysabri, respectively. Walgreens-OptionCare can provide this medication through Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy, a select supplier of Tysabri.

- The FDA notified healthcare professionals and patients in January about the potential for mistaking **edetate disodium** and **edetate calcium disodium**. Deaths have been reported in children and adults mistakenly given edetate disodium instead of edetate calcium disodium, or when edetate disodium was used for chelation therapies and other uses not approved by the FDA. With similar names and both commonly referred to as EDTA, the two products are easily mistaken for each other despite having different indications. Edetate disodium is approved as emergency treatment for certain patients with hypercalcemia or heart rhythm problems as a result of high amounts of digitalis in the blood. Edetate calcium disodium is approved as treatment for severe lead poisoning.

Mark Your Calendar

Below are some current and upcoming health-related observances that might be of interest to you and your colleagues. On the lighter side, April is National Humor Month—an observance created in 1976 to increase public awareness of the therapeutic value of laughter. For a list of this year's national observances, visit the National Health Information Center's web site at www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho.

Observance	Date	Sponsor/Web Site
Hemophilia Awareness Month	March	National Hemophilia Foundation www.hemophilia.org
National Professional Social Work Month	March	National Association of Social Workers www.socialworkers.org
Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month	May	Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America www.aafa.org
National Nurses Week	May 6-12	American Nurses Association www.nursingworld.org
National Hospital Week	May 11-17	American Hospital Association www.aha.org

Look for Us at These Trade Shows

Wisconsin Assisted Living Association (WALA) Spring Conference	Dallas/Fort Worth CMSA 16th Annual Conference
April 1-3 Madison, Wis. Alliant Energy Center www.ewala.org	April 2-4 Arlington, Texas Arlington Convention Center www.dfwcmsa.com
CMSA Chicago Annual Conference	Austin Case Management Association Annual Conference
April 9 Oakbrook Terrace, Ill. Drury Lane www.cmsachicago.org	April 17 Austin, Texas Norris Conference Center www.austin-cma.org

For a full list of upcoming trade shows, go to www.WalgreensHomeCare.com and view the Trade Show Calendar.

Our Services

Infusion, Nursing care coordination, Respiratory therapy and Home oxygen, Specialty pharmacy

To initiate a referral, contact your local Walgreens-OptionCare. You can also refer to us through the ECIN online referral service or e-mail homecare@walgreens.com. For general information about Walgreens-OptionCare programs and services, e-mail homecare@walgreens.com.

Editorial Board

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