

Partnering With Pharmacists
Leah Butt, Primary Care Pharmacist

I recently learned that many people thought I had quit my job as pharmacist at Stueck Pharmacy. This is not the case; I still work for Stueck Pharmacy but for the past five months I have been spending three to five afternoons a week at Leader Primary Health Care Centre. What does a pharmacist do at the medical clinic? Several things actually:

- **DISEASE EDUCATION**

In September, Gordon and I teamed up with Wanda, the public health nurse, to provide an informational session on head lice at Leader Composite School. I also wrote an article about treating head lice for the newspaper. In December and January I assisted Mikki, the nurse practitioner, and Wanda by researching Gardasil and Human Papilloma Virus in preparation for a public forum in Fox Valley; which I was unable to attend. In January Corrine, a fourth year pharmacy student, did a presentation about portion control at a Chronic Disease Management Class led by Mikki.

- **ACADEMIC DETAILING**

This is the promotion of quality, evidence-based, patient-centered, cost-effective drug therapy. I try to provide the physicians with unbiased information about new drugs that are available; including efficacy and safety data, cost, and whether or not the drug is covered in Saskatchewan.

- **MEDICATION EXPERTISE**

When I am working from my office at the clinic I am more accessible to the physicians, Mikki, Wanda, home care, etc. I am available to answer questions about drugs; such as side effects, dosage, interactions; recommend a particular therapy, help with dosage adjustments and accept patient referrals.

- **CHART REVIEWS**

Since I started at the clinic I have been reviewing the charts of certain patients as requested by Mikki and the physicians. I check that medication doses are appropriate and suggest modifications when necessary in order to reach therapeutic targets for blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol.

- **MEDICATION REVIEWS**

I am available for appointments with individuals who are taking multiple medications and feel that they would benefit from medication education. Any changes that will improve health will then be passed on to the relevant practitioner.

- **ENHANCED LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES**

As part of Stueck Pharmacy's contract with Western Seniors Care Home I provide medication reviews for each resident every three months. I also attend weekly rounds with the physician and charge nurse. This is not required in our contract but my attendance is important as it keeps the pharmacy up-to-date regarding each resident's therapy. It also allows me to make recommendations to the physician and be directly

involved in each resident's care. When the need arises I also provide educational information to the staff at WSCH.

- **HOSPITAL ROUNDS**

Leader Union Hospital does not have a staff pharmacist. Medications are provided by Cypress Hospital and Stueck Pharmacy. Normally a hospital pharmacist checks that drugs are appropriate based on the patient's age, medical condition, and other medications; as well as checking that the dose is accurate. At LUH this is the responsibility of the nursing staff and the physicians on top of all their other duties. I am doing daily rounds to review new hospital admissions, discuss issues with the nursing staff, and make drug therapy recommendations to the physicians.

- **HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PREPARATION**

Often when people are discharged from hospital some medications are stopped and new ones are started. This can be confusing. Before patients leave Leader Union Hospital I will try to meet with them to discuss their medications, remind them about which ones have been stopped, answer questions about new ones, and provide a list of current medications to give to their regular pharmacy.

Stueck Pharmacy currently compensates me for my time spent outside of the pharmacy. This is a large financial burden, however, we feel that the work I am doing is essential to the health of our patients. There is much more involved in pharmacy than dispensing medications. Pharmacists are medication experts and it is our responsibility to share our knowledge with patients and other health care professionals in order to ensure proper and optimal drug therapy. We are currently working with Cypress Regional Health Authority and the Government of Saskatchewan to obtain funding for a part-time Primary Care Pharmacist based out of Leader Primary Health Care Centre. Unfortunately there are more projects than there is money.