



Senior Services Plus Healthy Connections Program awarded grant

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Coordinated by SSP and SIUE School of Pharmacy



Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy and Senior Services Plus have jointly received a grant for a two year project that is in search of improving the safety and effectiveness of medication use during care transitions from hospital to home for older adults treated for venous thromboembolism (VTE). The grant opportunity was made possible by collaboration between Pfizer Independent Grants for Learning & Change and Bristol-Meyers Squibb Independent Medical Education, who are providing project funding, and the Joint Commission, who will provide administrative oversight for the program.

Senior Services Plus will play a pivotal role during the next two years by providing 3 Healthy Connections Coaches at separate hospitals across Madison and St. Clair Counties. Senior Services Plus Executive Director Jonathan Becker said “Senior Services Plus has been operating a hospital to home program called Healthy Connections since January 2014, which has seen phenomenal growth since it was created. Being on the leading front of creating a better transitional care program shows the importance of Senior Services Plus in the community and local hospitals.”

Hannah Tolan, MA/Gerontology, is a current Healthy Connections Coach for Senior Services Plus. Tolan said, “The emphasis of our visits is to empower patients and caregivers to take an active role in their treatment plan and to educate them on community supports and services available to help them stay healthy at home.” During site visits, the Coaches address five primary elements: follow-up appointments, medication management, health safety plans, transportation, and linkage to community resources.

One of the unique aspects of the project will be the addition of a pharmacist into the existing Healthy Connections program. SIUE School of Pharmacy Professor and Project Director Dr. Mark Ruscin said, “Medication-related problems occur commonly when older adults leave the hospital. Finding and fixing those problems early after discharge can improve medication safety for seniors and may help reduce the need for additional hospital or emergency room visits. We think having a pharmacist working with the Healthy Connections Coaches can enhance patient safety.”

Senior Services Plus and SIUE School of Pharmacy have a wonderful opportunity to shed some light to area healthcare and social service providers regarding the concern of readmission rates among seniors. For more information, please contact Senior Services Plus at (618) 465-3298.