

Safe Prescribing for Women Veterans In Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN) 4

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Introduction

The aim in providing well-woman care for women of childbearing age “is to reduce the risk of adverse health effects for women, their pregnancies, and newborns by optimizing their health and knowledge of teratogenic medications before pregnancy. Educating and screening all women Veterans of childbearing potential as an integrated part of routine care is essential, especially for women Veteran patients with chronic physical and mental health conditions.

Reluctance to Simplify

Current processes in place were geared towards Women’s Health weren’t optimal as prescribing was happening in all specialties.

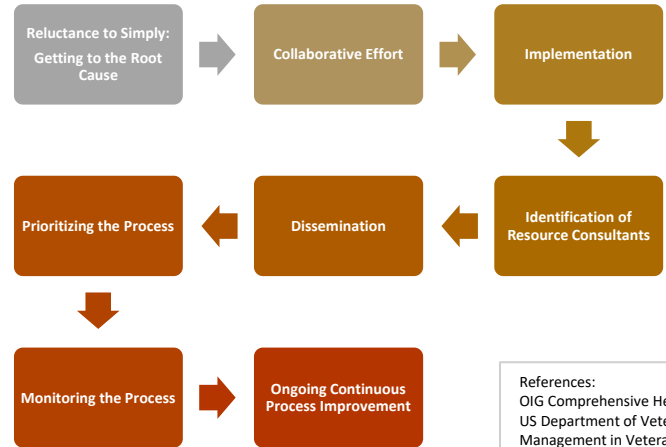
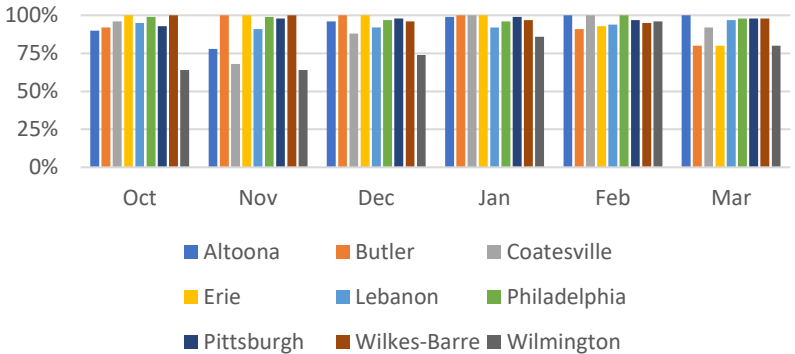
The national pharmacy package elicits an alert to the providers when a teratogenic medication is prescribed that counseling needs to occur, but this is one of many and can be overlooked due to alert fatigue.

Collaborative Effort

Women’s Health
Pharmacy
QPS
Clinical Informatics
VISN-level workgroup
Primary Care Integrated Clinical Community (ICC)

Results

VISN 4 FY24 Teratogenic Medication Counseling Compliance (Q1-Q2)



Implementation

- Streamlined Documentation – Teratogenic and High-Risk Medication Education Template
- Time Out for Teratogenic Medication Safety – hard stop for prescribers by pharmacy.

Identification of Resource Consultants

Women’s Health Clinical Pharmacists
Reproductive Health Physician

Dissemination

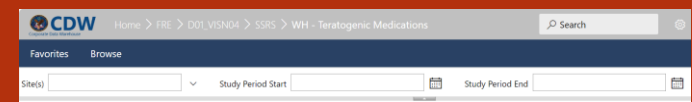
Process shared widely throughout VISN 4
VISN-level presentations to VA Facility leadership
Chief of Staff emails and educational meetings with service lines at local levels

Prioritizing the Process

FY23 Priority of Primary Care ICC

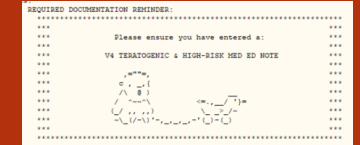
Monitoring the Process

VISN level dashboard created based on Teratogenic Medication Education Template



Ongoing Continuous Process Improvement

Continuous quarterly reporting
Updates to processes as identified
Incorporation of national template



Conclusion

Establishing a process that ensured clear communication allowed for all prescribers in any setting to understand the process and what was needed to happen. A streamline monitoring system will continue to keep the process relevant. Women’s Health teamed up with many VISN and facility stakeholders and established a new way to prescribe medication to women of child-bearing age that was truly committed to zero harm and all about enhancing healthcare for women Veterans.

References:
OIG Comprehensive Health Healthcare Inspection Program (CHIP) Review Guide Medication Management: Teratogenic Medications Prescribed to Women Veterans Fiscal Year 2022
US Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General (September 22, 2023), Comprehensive Healthcare Inspection Program Summary Report: Evaluation of Medication Management in Veterans Health Administration.