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New Pharmacy Services at Grand Itasca Follow National Patient Safety Trends

Grand Rapids, MN — Health care consumers at Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital will benefit from new pharmacy services that are now available. Grand Itasca has been working on the development of a clinical pharmacy services program since early this year. The new services target national patient safety goals aimed at reducing medication errors. Clinical pharmacy services at Grand Itasca will assist patients in understanding what medications they are taking and why.

The enhanced pharmacy model will see Grand Itasca Pharmacy Services add several clinical pharmacists. “Clinical pharmacists have an advanced doctor of pharmacy degree,” said Sheila Ingram, Interim Director of Pharmacy Services at Grand Itasca. “The advanced degree and the expertise of clinical pharmacists will allow Grand Itasca to provide a higher level of pharmacy service similar to what you would see in the larger medical centers in Minnesota and throughout the nation.”

The new services will have Grand Itasca clinical pharmacists on the hospital floor, reviewing charts and consulting with hospitalists managing the patient’s care. They will also monitor the therapeutic responses of the patient’s medications throughout their hospital stay. Clinical pharmacists are in-house medication consultants that review current medication dosages as well as recommend changes to medications.

“Patient safety at Grand Itasca is the number one priority in every department at Grand Itasca,” stated John M. Kutch, Grand Itasca CEO. “These enhanced pharmacy services will complement the newly implemented hospitalist program that has a physician on the hospital floor 24/7. The hospitalist will be able to collaborate with the clinical pharmacist

on the medication needs of the patient. In addition, clinical pharmacists will provide a resource for other members of the health care team to consult on medications prescribed for a patient.”

Clinical pharmacy services will also provide outpatients at Grand Itasca additional benefits. “Our clinical pharmacists have special expertise in managing medications used for chronic diseases”, according to Peter Friedlieb, MD, Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee Chairman. “They will provide consultation to our physicians and nurse practitioners for patients taking multiple medications and supplements to prevent potentially dangerous drug interactions and ensure optimum use. An example is our Protime Clinic for managing blood thinners where the clinical pharmacists will work with nurses, physicians and patients in managing these critical medications”.

John Kutch, CEO said, “The changes in our pharmacy services are designed to improve the safety of our patients. A real-time dialog between the pharmacist, nursing staff, and physician will allow everyone involved to review and discuss the best medications for the patient.” Kutch continued, “With this team approach, it is more likely that problems like drug interactions, drug allergies, and incorrect medications and dosages will be prevented.”

Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital is a non-profit, integrated delivery system that employs nearly 600 people. The integrated clinic and hospital, described as a “modern expression of hospitality and healing” is home to over 50 physicians and other providers including specialists in Orthopedics, Ob/Gyn, Pediatrics, Podiatry, Radiology, Urology, and Acute Rehabilitation.