

Medical Arts Pharmacy



MEDICAL ARTS PHARMACY

Detail	Site Information
Location	Fayetteville, Arkansas
Primary Patient Population(s)	Customers of the independent pharmacy and others referred by local physicians More than one-quarter of the population at or below the poverty level
Practice Setting	Community-based pharmacy practice
Pharmacist Authority	None
Care Team Members Providing Tobacco Cessation Services	Pharmacists Pharmacy technicians
Primary Payer(s)	None
Billing Codes	N/A
Metrics of Success	Since early 2019, quit rate for the 23 patients in tobacco cessation program is 43%



About Medical Arts Pharmacy

Medical Arts Pharmacy is an independent community-based practice that has served as an integral part of the community in Fayetteville, Arkansas, for over 60 years. The pharmacy provides both prescription processing and patient care services. The pharmacy has a private consultation area and a full-sized classroom for the delivery of patient care services. Medical Arts Pharmacy has a robust vaccination program, including traveling flu clinics, with concentrated outreach to patients in the community who are eligible for the shingles vaccine. The pharmacy team also provides

tobacco cessation services, opioid therapy assessment, pharmacogenomic counseling, and medication adherence support.

Tobacco cessation services were initially implemented in early 2019, through 4 months of pilot program grant funding from Harding University. The pilot program and funding created initial momentum for Medical Arts Pharmacy to develop tobacco cessation services; however, maintaining the scope of services without financial support has been challenging. Medical Arts Pharmacy's tobacco cessation services are provided at no cost to patients, making resources to support and expand

the tobacco cessation program extremely limited. A partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health provides patients with nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and tobacco prevention and cessation resources through the [Be Well Arkansas](#) program. There are no other local providers offering face-to-face tobacco cessation counseling and support.



Training and Authority to Provide Tobacco Cessation Services

The focus of Medical Arts Pharmacy is increasing access to pharmacist-provided tobacco cessation services for patients in the community. Members of the pharmacy team are trained to support patients in need of tobacco cessation services. Pharmacists provide these services within the current pharmacist scope of practice in Arkansas.

Education and Training

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians involved in providing tobacco cessation services were trained through a live 1-day training session offered by Harding University College of Pharmacy. This training was part of a program supported by the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Pharmacists Association to support independent pharmacies initiating tobacco cessation services. This training provided an overview of the impact of tobacco on the residents of Arkansas, training on the elements of tobacco cessation interventions provided in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's

[Ask-Advise-Refer](#) model and the [“5 A's”: Ask-Advise-Assess-Assist-Arrange](#) intervention, and a discussion of medication therapies for tobacco cessation. Attendees were trained how to use a carbon monoxide monitor, employ motivational interviewing techniques, and integrate these services into the community pharmacy workflow.

State Authority

In February 2019, the State of Arkansas passed legislation that authorized the Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy to issue a statewide protocol for pharmacist prescribing of NRT, but the Board issuance of this protocol is pending. Under existing scope of practice, pharmacists in Arkansas are permitted to recommend and counsel on NRT that can be purchased over the counter. However, for patients on Medicaid and some commercial payers, a prescription is required for NRT to be covered. Pharmacists may also recommend prescription medication therapy for tobacco cessation, but they must work with a physician to secure a prescription for these treatments. Because pharmacists do not yet have prescriptive authority for tobacco cessation therapies, Medical Arts Pharmacy spends a significant amount of time coordinating care with patients' prescribers to initiate prescription orders for NRT and prescription cessation therapies. The pharmacist typically spends approximately 20 minutes per patient to facilitate patient access to needed and affordable medication therapy.



Accessing Pharmacist-Provided Smoking Cessation Services

Patients can participate in the pharmacy-based tobacco cessation services through self-referral or physician-based referrals.

Pharmacist and Patient Self-Referral to Pharmacist-Provided Services

Patients engaged in tobacco cessation services at Medical Arts Pharmacy primarily self-refer to access these services. At the time of self-referral, the pharmacy schedules a time for the initial tobacco cessation appointment. Patients are made aware of the services through in-store messaging and through the pharmacy's social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram. The in-store information is provided by a detailed flyer that is available at the counter and describes the tobacco cessation program. Medical Arts Pharmacy also screens all patients for tobacco use through the pharmacy intake form, which is completed by patients annually. This process offers an opportunity to identify patients who may benefit from tobacco cessation services.

Provider Referral

Approximately 25% of patients in the service were referred by their primary care provider to participate. Local physicians, including pulmonologists, are the main referring providers. These referrals have arisen from direct pharmacist outreach to providers to discuss the benefits of the program.

The pharmacy provides local prescribing physicians with a flyer and referral form to help promote the availability of the service. Physicians recommend that patients who may benefit from the service call Medical Arts Pharmacy.



Delivery of Pharmacist-Provided Tobacco Cessation Services

Community-based pharmacists leverage results of screening tools and assessments to support recommendations for tobacco cessation and to engage patients in the quit process. Pharmacists at Medical Arts are easily accessible, with a location that is part of many patients' routine, allowing ongoing touchpoints and opportunities to reinforce educational and treatment messages.

Initial Clinical Pharmacy Visit on Tobacco Cessation

The initial tobacco cessation session is a scheduled appointment with the pharmacist and takes 45 to 60 minutes. On the day of the visit, a pharmacy technician conducts the initial patient intake, which includes demographic and basic health history information. A carbon monoxide monitor is used to determine the patient's carbon monoxide level. This objective data helps the pharmacist illustrate to the patient how these levels are affected by tobacco use. The pharmacist explains these test results, measures the patient's blood pressure, and gathers specific tobacco use history from the patient.

Pharmacists administer the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) to screen for depressed mood and the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 2-item (GAD-2) screening tool to initially assess for generalized anxiety disorder. If patients have high scores on either of these assessments, then the more extensive PHQ-9 and GAD-7 questionnaires are administered. These assessments for depression and anxiety can help inform the pharmacist whether bupropion might be an appropriate treatment option. Anxiety can also be a trigger for many patients who use tobacco, which allows the pharmacist to provide counseling to help patients manage and cope with these symptoms.

The Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence, a standard instrument for determining the intensity of physical addiction to nicotine, is also administered to patients participating in the tobacco cessation program. This test provides a measure of nicotine dependence related to cigarette smoking through the evaluation of the quantity of cigarette consumption, the compulsion to use, and dependence. The results of these assessments provide insights to the pharmacist to help determine the best therapy for an individual patient (i.e., Is the patient a good candidate for nicotine replacement or a prescription medication for tobacco cessation?). In the context of these screening results, the pharmacist and patient also discuss family history, habits and routines, barriers to quitting, and reasons for quitting tobacco. The

patient is encouraged to set a quit date. The pharmacist utilizes patient education resources from the Arkansas Department of Health's Be Well Arkansas program and refers patients to the quitline.

The pharmacist educates the patient on available options for NRT and prescription medication for tobacco cessation. If the patient is insured or recommended a prescription medication, the pharmacist works directly with the patient's physician to obtain a prescription order for needed tobacco cessation medications. The Arkansas Department of Health provides a free 2-week supply of NRT to any patient enrolled in Medical Arts Pharmacy's smoking cessation program, who has Medicare, is uninsured, or has an insurance plan that does not cover NRT.

Follow-Up Clinical Pharmacy Visits for Tobacco Cessation

The pharmacist conducts telephone outreach 2 weeks after the initial appointment to check on the patient's progress and provide support to troubleshoot any initial barriers. The pharmacist also schedules a face-to-face follow-up visit at this time. Patients can participate in up to four additional follow-up sessions, which typically take 15 to 20 minutes each. Approximately one-third of 20 enrolled patients returned for the second face-to-face session, and only one patient returned for the third face-to-face session. Pharmacists conducted additional follow-up by telephone with some patients.

Informal Follow-Up During Prescription Pick-Up

The accessibility of the community pharmacy practice allows the pharmacists to engage with enrolled patients regularly when they pick up prescriptions or shop in the store. This ongoing opportunity to informally engage with patients is particularly valuable, allowing pharmacists to provide encouragement, support, or additional resources as necessary.

Documenting Services

The practice has developed a specific documentation program within its PioneerRx pharmacy software to document patient encounters and test results from the tobacco cessation program. Sessions are also documented in an e-care plan and sent to the state Community Pharmacy Enhanced Services Network, which is advocating

for expansion in pharmacist authority and payment for pharmacist services. Pharmacists at Medical Arts Pharmacy do not have access to electronic health records or other patient information from prescribers.



Sustainability

Currently, pharmacists are not recognized by the state, or nationally in the Social Security Act, as health care providers, so the pharmacy is not able to bill insurers for the time pharmacists spend providing tobacco cessation services. Initial grant funding provided necessary reimbursement for pharmacist services that made the program viable in its pilot phase.

The only compensation the pharmacy earns for the tobacco cessation program is through the sale of tobacco cessation medications. Prescription

The Human Impact of Tobacco Cessation Services

“The patient I think of the most is someone who quit in June 2019 and is still tobacco-free. When he came in, he already had chronic lung disease. His biggest fear was not being able to catch his breath and dying from not being able to breathe. Those fears were motivating for him. He had experienced episodes where he was gasping for air, trying to catch his breath, and he felt like smoking was contributing to that. I see him regularly in the pharmacy, and I still check in with him to see if he is having any challenges. His spouse still smokes, and yet he has managed to stay smoke-free, which is amazing to me.”

—Julie Stewart, PharmD

medications and prescribed NRTs are processed as a normal prescription, meaning the pharmacy is reimbursed for the cost of the medication and provided a nominal dispensing fee. Patients may also pay cash for the NRTs if their insurance does not cover them. For patients without insurance, the pharmacist collaborates with the Arkansas Department of Health, which provides NRT at no cost to the patient, but the pharmacy receives no dispensing fee for this service. Despite the lack of compensation for the pharmacist's professional time or expertise, Medical Arts Pharmacy continues to engage in tobacco cessation activities to further the care of patients.

Prescriptive authority and payment are not directly connected. However, having no prescriptive authority requires considerable intervention on behalf of the patients, and without payment for these services, the program cannot be sustainable. The pharmacy aims to attract payer contracts with commercial insurance companies or self-insured employers, which could provide the reimbursement needed for program sustainability. Medical Arts Pharmacy is hopeful that its efforts to provide counseling and tobacco cessation medication therapies will ultimately be reimbursed.



Overcoming Challenges to Achieve Success

Within the initial pilot program, the pharmacy enrolled 15 patients, and the practice has subsequently enrolled 8 additional patients since the pilot ended. Nine patients quit smoking, and one smokeless tobacco user quit. For patients who have quit tobacco, the program often provided the “final nudge” they needed, and ongoing in-person follow-up is unnecessary. To date, the quit rate for the Medical Arts Pharmacy tobacco cessation program is 43%.

Current Challenges

The biggest challenge for Medical Arts Pharmacy is patient engagement, particularly getting patients who have indicated an interest to engage for the first visit. The practice had almost 40 patient self-referrals to the program, and when the pharmacist reached out to formally engage for an appointment, patients were more hesitant to engage, with only about half of interested patients enrolling in the program. Some patients indicated an interest in quitting but were not ready to participate in a program yet, while other patients made appointments that they did not attend. The pharmacy staff routinely calls to remind patients of the program and informally engages when they see patients in the retail store. Pharmacists are focused on making sure that patients will rely on the pharmacy when they are ready to engage.

Having patients continue to engage in provided services is also a significant barrier. Sometimes patients are not fully ready to quit, some patients have set a quit date and did not successfully quit on that day, and others may have relapsed or are discouraged. Regardless of the reason, patients often feel shame or embarrassment about coming back to see the pharmacist, so the pharmacy team is always supportive and works to overcome these natural responses.

Future Plans

Medical Arts Pharmacy is looking forward to the Arkansas Board of Pharmacy issuing the statewide protocol for pharmacist prescribing of NRT. This action would reduce administrative burden to secure prescriptions for tobacco cessation medications from local physicians, improve patient access to appropriate cessation therapy, and enhance visibility to pharmacists' role in cessation, which may increase referrals from local physicians. The pharmacy is also investigating the possibility of entering into business agreements with local physicians to conduct tobacco cessation appointments within the physician office setting. This would allow the services to be billed "incident to" a physician's National Provider Identifier number, which can be done without provider status for pharmacists.

The pharmacists will continue to engage patients in need of tobacco cessation support as the profession of pharmacy works toward being recognized as health care providers and therefore permitted to bill for patient care services. If this occurs, Medical Arts Pharmacy would be able to significantly expand the cessation program and have a broader reach for patients in northwest Arkansas.



Summary of Facilitating and Limiting Factors

Medical Arts Pharmacy's pharmacist-provided tobacco cessation services are both facilitated and limited by specific patient factors, system factors, and policy factors.

Facilitating Factors

- Well-respected practice, integrated in the community for 60 years.
- Referral network.
- Pharmacists have demonstrated grit by continuing to offer developed services, even without payment.
- As a community-based pharmacy, Medical Arts Pharmacy is the only option for patients seeking these services in northwest Arkansas.

Limiting Factors

- Limited scope of practice in the state.
- Loss of grant funding for the program.
- Inconsistent insurance reimbursement for tobacco cessation therapies or services.
- Patient readiness to quit or adhere to quit plan.

This promising practice profile was developed based on information from and interviews with:

- Julie Stewart, PharmD, Pharmacist, Medical Arts Pharmacy

The views expressed in this profile are her own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Medical Arts Pharmacy.



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This document is a component of the APhA Promising Practices for Pharmacist Engagement in Tobacco Cessation Interventions.