



NEWS RELEASE

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BACH pharmacy limits controlled substances

Encourages safe medication use through new policy

FT. CAMPBELL, Ky. – To encourage the safe use of medications, the Blanchfield Army Community Hospital (BACH) pharmacies will be implementing a new Army-wide policy as of July 5, 2011 restricting prescribed quantities of controlled substances at all military treatment facilities.

A controlled substance prescription (CRx) is a prescription medication that has been classified as controlled (Schedule II-V) by the Drug Enforcement Agency as a medication with potential for abuse. CRx medications are prescribed for a number of legitimate medical reasons. The most common CRx medications are: narcotics/opiates for severe pain; benzodiazepines for anxiety and for trouble sleeping; and stimulants for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and difficulty staying awake. For a full list of controlled substances, please visit:

www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/schedules/index.html.

TRICARE beneficiaries should be prescribed the minimum quantity of controlled substances necessary to treat an acute illness or injury. Medical providers prescribing controlled substances to treat chronic conditions may prescribe a 30-day supply of medication. Schedule II controlled substances cannot have refills. Schedule II stimulant medications used to treat ADHD are excluded from this policy and may be prescribed for up to a 90-day supply. Schedule III-V controlled substances may have up to five refills. Questions about CRx limits should be discussed with a medical provider or pharmacist.

To promote safe medication use, medical providers are also encouraged to schedule frequent, brief clinical visits with patients to verify medication effectiveness and communicate with patients regarding medication side effects.

“This open line of communication encourages patients to take an active role in their health care. We are working hard to encourage safe medication use for all our beneficiaries,” said BACH Pharmacy Chief Maj. Paul Kassebaum.

He cited a February 2011 Army policy which established the above limits and a six-month expiration date for the use of CRx dispensed to Soldiers, starting from the date the last prescription was dispensed by the pharmacy to the Soldier.

According to the policy, Soldiers with chronic medical conditions that require the use of a controlled substance medication must obtain a new CRx at least every six months to avoid potential Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) issues. Soldiers with “leftover” controlled substance medications from a short-term/acute problem, such as pain medications from an old dental procedure, should remember to always safely discard leftover medications and to never self-treat with leftover prescription medications.

Kassebaum reiterated that policies like these offer guidelines that promote open communication among providers, pharmacists and patients while encouraging the safe use of controlled substance medications.

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