

# PSYCHIATRIC PHARMACISTS: **CARING FOR OLDER ADULTS** TREATING THE WHOLE PATIENT



## Treating the Whole Patient

Brittany Vickery found the perfect position after completing a general pharmacy residency where she was interested in both psychiatry and internal medicine. As a Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacist in Hendersonville, North Carolina, Dr. Vickery cares for older patients at Advent Health, a community hospital.

Many of the patients who are admitted have psychiatric symptoms caused by medical conditions and the medications used to treat them. Dr. Vickery's training prepared her well to address all of their disorders. She is also full-time faculty at Wingate University School of Pharmacy, teaching psychiatric pharmacotherapy and precepting student pharmacists in the hospital.

## Solving a Puzzle

**Much of Dr. Vickery's time is spent on identifying and solving medication-related problems** while the interprofessional team works to determine if the admission was caused by a psychiatric or a medical problem or both.

Some patients have complications from numerous medications added over time; some are admitted on 20 or more medications. Others have a more abrupt onset of problems, so quickly identifying a responsible medication is vital. Verifying home diagnoses and medications upon admission is key, as is streamlining prescriptions before discharge.

Dr. Vickery manages common medical treatments, such as infections, high blood pressure, and diabetes through a hospital protocol. Recommendations regarding psychiatric medications are made to the team psychiatrist or physician assistant. It takes the entire healthcare team, including pharmacists, to help patients transition back to home or assisted living facilities as soon and safely as possible.

## Making a Difference



**Over 800 interventions annually**

Most interventions are focused on monitoring effectiveness and side effects, optimizing medication regimens, discontinuing unnecessary medications, and educating patients and providers

**“Dr. Vickery makes excellent contributions to the care of our patients.** With her focus on medications, she makes suggestions including drug interactions, appropriate dosing considerations, and lab testing which may have otherwise been overlooked.”

- Jonah All

*Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner, Advent Health,  
Hendersonville*

**“I didn’t know that a UTI could cause back pain or make me feel more confused and was surprised to learn that this was what brought me to the hospital after talking with the pharmacist.”**

- Anonymous patient



## A Safe Return Home

An 80-year-old was admitted to the hospital on 18 medications prescribed by three different physicians. Several of the medications had been added to treat side effects of other prescription medications. Working together with the inpatient team, Dr. Vickery helped adjust and reduce his regimen to eight medications. The patient was able to return home with his wife with clearer thinking, improved functioning, and restored quality of life.

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