MEDICATIONS CURRICULUM

This document serves as a guide for care managers to walk patients through the Medication educational program. This document offers tips and resources for your conversations with patients to help you and them succeed. Patients will receive printed handouts from time to time. They may want to get a folder or a notebook where they can take notes. Encourage patient to get in the habit of bringing notebook to doctor visits.

LEVEL 1

GOALS FOR LEVEL 1

Level 1, Goal 1:
Maintain an accurate, up to date medication list

Together, fill out a medication chart that includes all prescribed and over-the-counter medications. Format of the chart should be:

Medication Name	Pill Size (# mg)	How Taken (e.g. two pills twice a day)
	Injectable medications: *instead of pill size, include dose* ***Supplements:*** *dose may not be available. Brand name, number of pills.*	

- Plan to bring a copy of this medication list to all doctor visits.
- If possible, maintaining this on a computer will make it easier to update instead of a handwritten list. Two apps for smartphones (iPhone and Android) are My Therapy and Medisafe; they are free with premium versions available. Or the patient can print out a copy of the list but keep the master document on the computer.
- If all prescriptions are filled at one pharmacy, the pharmacy may be able to supply a medication list for the patient.

Level 1, Goal 2:
Maintain an accurate list of medication allergies and intolerances

Together, fill out a chart that lists medication allergies and sensitivities. Format should be:

Medication Name	Type of Problem Encountered

- A medication allergy is a significant reaction including rash, wheezing, or tongue swelling.
- A medication intolerance or sensitivity is an unpleasant side effect, like nausea or constipation.
- This can be fit on a wallet card to be carried as it should not change as often as a medication list.

LEVEL 2

GOALS FOR LEVEL 2

Level 2 Goal 1:
Increase knowledge about the medications being taken



Review the document "***Medicines for Kidney Health Simplified***." Patients who desire more detail can use the more advanced version "Medications To Manage Kidney Disease."

Review the patient's medication list. (If they don't have an updated one, move back to Level one and create one.) Are they able to identify which medications are kidney protective? Make a plan to review the medication list with a trusted professional (including PCP, nephrologist, pharmacist) to double check their understanding.

The document lists medicines that are important for kidney health. As the patient reads over it, are there medicines they might benefit from, that they are not currently taking? Make a plan to ask their nephrologist about these medicines at their next visit.

Level 2 Goal 2:
Pursue a small step change to promote adherence to CKD medications



Review the document "***Taking your medicines – tips to help you stay on track.***" Identify one or two things you can do from the list.

Level 2 Goal 3:
Understand medication safety and side effects



Review the document "***Medication Side Effects***." It lists the classes of CKD medications in the same order as "***Medications to Manage Kidney Disease***." Discuss the common side effects from the CKD drugs they have been prescribed

- Discuss which side effects require immediate doctor attention or patient action, have individual write them down and post where they can see them.
- Discuss what can be done to relieve the common side effects from CKD drugs.

LEVEL 3

GOALS FOR LEVEL 3

Level 3 Goal 1:
Strive for full adherence to CKD medication regimen



Start the conversation with "***Why Taking Your Medicine as Directed is Important***."

It's really important to recognize how common it is for people to miss doses or skip medications. Emphasize this in opening the discussion – "Since it's such a common problem, let's spend a little time on this, even if you think it's not a problem for you. If nothing else, maybe you'll learn something that helps someone you love, or you'll be prepared if you run into a problem in the future."



Next, have the patient complete "***Worksheet: Questions about your medications***." They can do this in advance, or you can assist them through the call. This worksheet may flag issues, questions or concerns. Help the patient generate a list of these that they can discuss with their doctor.

Tips for discussion of medication adherence with patients:

- For patients who choose not to take a medication: realize that if they share this with you, they are trusting you and being open and vulnerable – what a gift!
  - Acknowledge they have a right to choose NOT to use any medication
  - Stress that they owe it to themselves to make sure their decision is well thought out. It is an important decision about their personal health, and they need to discuss it with their prescribing physician.
  - Encourage them to discuss it with their doctor so they can make sure they have all the correct information they need to make their decision.
- Discuss the need to keep revising and improving pill dosing reminder systems to achieve medication adherence on most days.
  - Check in with the patient about how their system to keep track of their medications is working. Encourage troubleshooting of any problems. Do they need to try a different system?
  - Celebrate success! Even small improvements are meaningful. Make sure to stay positive and encouraging.
  - For someone who is struggling, suggest using the "SMART goals worksheet" to help define the change they would like to make.

Level 3 Goal 2:
Learn about the risks of stopping or interrupting CKD medications



Review "***Risks of stopping your medications***" with patient. The format is in line with the previous medication resources, with medication categories in the same order. Not every patient will be on every medication. Patients should have their medication list at hand as they review this resource. You only need to discuss the medications the patient is taking.

Level 3 Goal 3:
Use positive reinforcement to achieve full medication adherence

- Encourage patient to self-reward for improvements in medication adherence: make a list of inexpensive and fun ways to self-reward for medication adherence. Avoid rewards that involve junk food and being inactive. Self-reward when fully adherent for one week and later when a month is reached. Use the resource: "***Handout for Self Rewards***."
- Encourage patient to make life easier by consolidating prescription refill routines: investigate online/mail order prescriptions that allow for 90 day supplies; get all prescriptions filled at the same time (reduce multiple pharmacy trips). These are reviewed in the resource "***Taking Your Medicines: Tips to Help You Stay on Track***." Doing this takes effort, so help patient set a goal to get this done and decide on reward once done.

Level 3 Goal 4:
Optimize medication costs

- Further detail, if cost is a problem identified in "***Worksheet: questions about your medications***."
- Are any of the patient's medications expensive? (Focus on what they pay out of pocket, not the list price that the insurance company claims to pay.) Review again the handout "***Taking your medicines – tips to help you stay on track***." Section 2 outlines some ways to reduce medication costs.
- If any medications are covered with patient assistance programs, determine when the program may expire or need renewal and plan for that.
- Medications under Medicare are covered by part D. Different Medicare Advantage plans will have different formularies, or lists of drugs they cover. The patient's local Area Agency on Aging might help them evaluate their plan options for the upcoming year. Open enrollment is mid-November to mid-December. Plan ahead for any changes.
- Encourage comparison shopping including GoodRx and CostPlusDrugs to see if out of pocket expenses can be brought down further
- Identify community resources that can help patients evaluate their part D plan and see if they would benefit from changes. The government runs a website: medicare.gov/plan-compare. They can also contact their local Area Agency on Aging. Find resources through: eldercare.acl.gov

LEVEL 4

GOALS FOR LEVEL 4:

Level 4 Goal 1:
Maintain kidney disease medications long-term

- Encourage individual to focus on maintaining full medication adherence over time
- Discuss the temptations to slack off on CKD medication compliance after health has improved
- Discuss the role of medications in the overall treatment of CKD (CKD medications, smoking cessation, limiting ultra processed foods, staying active, managing stress.) Remind patient that medications are an important part of their CKD care, but medications cannot overcome the influences of their other health choices.

Level 4 Goal 2:
Learn techniques to get back on track with medications

- Together, brainstorm some reasons why people deviate from their intention to take their medications as prescribed.
- Identify the ways that are most likely to get individual off-track with plan to be adherent to medication regimen.
- Together, brainstorm ways to get back on track when having trouble taking medications as prescribed. Try out a couple of ideas and see what works.
- Discuss relapse and that everyone falls off the wagon on occasion. It's normal and expected; quick recovery is the key

Level 4 Goal 3:
Learn skills to troubleshoot situations that might derail medication adherence

- Identify some potential medication adherence hazards: weekends, holidays, vacation, business trips, bad weather, family emergency, stressful situations, etc.
- Discuss the importance of developing an ongoing awareness of situations that could negatively impact taking medications as prescribed. Encourage patient to have a plan in place to proactively deal with medication adherence difficulty.
- Discuss ways to be flexible and try new ways to keep taking medications correctly.
- Discuss that the worst case scenario is to get back on track after a period of not taking medications correctly. Not a disaster!
- Have patient write up a "stay-on-track" plan for a situation where it could be difficult to stick to the medication protocol.
- Encourage patient to set up a reminder system to help maintain proper medication use in times of stress.

Level 4 Goal 4:
Pursue medication adherence stretch goals

- Encourage periodic review of "***Medications to Manage Kidney Disease***" resource. If they started with the easier version, see if they would like more detail.
- Make sure to update their medication list/ app/ computer file when medications are changed.
- Discuss focusing on ways to stay healthy so the medications can be as effective as possible (quit smoking, lose weight, limit ultra processed foods, limit/control stress, take at least 10,000 steps each day, etc). This is a good time to decide on the next part of the curriculum to tackle.