

PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

About the Prescription Assistance Program

The inability to afford medications was ranked 15th among the risk factors contributing health burden to the community in the Health District's recent prioritization process. If all residents had access to affordable prescriptions, the community could potentially gain an estimated 74 years of healthy life annually. Results from the Health District's triennial Community Health Survey show that cost continues to be a barrier for clients filling their prescription medications. In 2004, 14% of adults reported having been unable to fill prescriptions in the past two years because they could not afford it. There are approximately 9,500 Health District adults with low incomes who need assistance in order to be able to obtain prescribed medications.

Since 1996, the Health District's Prescription Assistance (PA) program has been assisting people in our community who are uninsured and have low-incomes to access medications through a combination of pharmacy vouchers and manufacturers' prescription assistance programs (MPAPs). The program provides financial relief to low-income individuals, and helps clients with complex issues regarding Medicare, Medicaid, and community resources. In addition to providing help in affording prescriptions, Prescription Assistance advocates also assess the needs of clients and assist, facilitate, and advocate for clients.

Internship Opportunities

Interns are placed as an advocate with the Prescription Assistance team. Interns will work collaboratively with team members, participating in team meetings, organizational meetings, and supervisor trainings. Interns have the opportunity to provide direct services to diverse clients. The direct services will include assessments, referrals, intake appointments, processing vouchers, and completing MPAPs. They will work collaboratively with pharmacies, physician offices, manufacturers, and community organizations. The work environment is fast-paced with walk-in clients and telephone clients who have complex needs.

Interns will learn about the following scope of services:

- Organizational structure, policies, and procedures as well as departmental policies and procedures
- Knowledge of both brand name and generic medications
- Evaluation of process and outcome objectives
- Advocating for clients' needs and advocating for larger system change
- Ethical aspects of prescription assistance
- Teamwork and collaboration

Supervision

Interns will receive weekly supervision from an on-site, clinical supervisor who is an appropriate match for the intern based on their program requirements. Interns are encouraged to attend team meetings, which occur each Wednesday morning from 10:00 a.m.-noon.

Who makes a good match for a Prescription Assistance placement?

The Prescription Assistance internship is appropriate for a BSW student or the first internship of an MSW student. The internship provides the generalist and advanced generalist perspective incorporating the numerous roles of the social worker. This fast-paced office requires the intern to be flexible, to be adaptable to a changing environment, to have the ability to multi-task, and to have good attention to detail.

PA seeks interns who are eager to learn about medications applicability to numerous medical, mental health, and substance abuse issues. The individual should be comfortable providing quality customer service to diverse clients with complex issues while setting appropriate boundaries.