

PSYCHIATRIC PHARMACISTS: VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION

Serving Veterans

Dr. Rosana Steavenson is a psychiatric pharmacist and the program manager of the Mental Health Clinical Pharmacy Program at the South Texas Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care System.

Dr. Steavenson spends most of her time seeing Veterans and managing their psychiatric medications through a VA scope of practice. Patients referred to her in the general mental health clinic are already diagnosed with illnesses such as treatment-resistant depression, PTSD, schizophrenia, or substance use disorders.

Dr. Steavenson is a core treatment team member which also includes psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses. The team meets weekly to collaborate and coordinate care. She is able to multiply her impact by spending the remainder of her time supervising 14 other psychiatric pharmacists in the VA system.

Supporting Other Clinicians

Dr. Steavenson has practiced in the VA for many years and is recognized as a medication expert. She shares that expertise freely. She has mentored many student pharmacists and psychiatric pharmacy residents. Thanks to her consistent performance, she was quickly accepted and integrated as a medication expert when she joined her current treatment team.

Health care providers within the VA have a good understanding of her unique role as a psychiatric pharmacist. Psychiatrists often call on Dr. Steavenson to review complex medication regimens, to sort out drug interactions, and to assist with medication choice within the VA's list of approved medications.



“The psychiatric pharmacists add a unique role in helping psychiatrists provide high quality care for veterans. As team members they are highly valued for their input on patients who have adverse reactions or have failed multiple treatments. **They are engaged in ensuring that patient safety is first and foremost.**”

-Nicole Braida, MD, Psychiatrist

Associate Chief of Staff, Mental Health

PREVENTING SUICIDES

Dr. Steavenson has become a respected expert on suicide prevention. She has participated on interprofessional suicide prevention committees and has provided national trainings for pharmacists on how to perform suicide assessments and develop safety plans.



400+
pharmacists trained in
suicide prevention

Because psychiatric pharmacists receive extensive training in educating patients about their medications, Dr. Steavenson feels that they have a unique ability to connect.



2000+
patient encounters by
Dr. Steavenson in 2018,
increasing access to care
for Veterans.

“Dr. Steavenson brings a unique perspective that complements my role. Whether it be advice on use of a therapeutic agent in a pregnant patient or a discussion of interactions between multiple medications, **she has input that is insightful and valuable. Her contributions go a long way in making patient treatment plans pertinent and comprehensive.**”

- Alnoor Ramji, MD
Board Certified Psychiatrist

Saving a Life

One day, Dr. Steavenson was able to put her training into action. A longtime patient came in for a visit and stated that she had been contemplating suicide just days earlier. Because she trusted Dr. Steavenson, they were able to work together to develop a plan to keep her safe that day, to secure her gun, and to increase visits with her treatment team.

After a few weeks and a medication adjustment, her depression finally lifted. Dr. Steavenson was able to help her through a very difficult time and now they are able to celebrate her successes together.

“Dr. Steavenson respects my views and opinions on being prescribed new medications. She listens to understand, not just listens to respond.”

- Anonymous Patient

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