

## MEET OUR ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC TEAM



*Pictured from left to right - Front Row: Paul Kocis, Todd Grove, Amy Foltz, Terri Zimmerman; Second Row: Ritu Light, Gretchen Richardson, BethAnn Shields; Back Row: Frank Herrmann, Beth Bittner; Not Pictured: Lisa Braccini-Barletta, Director of Outpatient Pharmacy Services*

We want to welcome our new assistant, Dianne Turner, to our team. Dianne comes to us from Lancaster General Hospital's Heart and Vascular Anticoagulation Clinic. We would also thank Terri Zimmerman for her years of service with our clinic. She now has a part-time position with the Food Services Department at the Medical Center.

The Anticoagulation Clinic (sometimes called the Coumadin Clinic) at the Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center is staffed by six pharmacists, two assistants, and five part-time pharmacists. Our Clinical Coordinator is Frank Herrmann, our Director is Lisa Braccini-Barletta, and Medical Directors are Dr. Edward Liszka and Dr. Raymond Reichwein.

Currently, we oversee care for approximately 1400 patients. One third of these patients are managed with point of care visits at either 30 Hope Dr. in Hershey or Nyes Rd. in Harrisburg. These patients receive a fingerstick to determine the INR, and discuss their warfarin dose and schedule with one of our pharmacists.

The other two thirds of our patients within the clinic are telemanaged. This means the patient goes to an outside lab (or Penn State Health lab) for a venipuncture to determine the INR. After the results are received, the Anticoagulation Clinic pharmacists contact the patient by telephone to discuss the warfarin dose and schedule.

Assisting you with all of your anticoagulation needs is part of our job as well. If there is a necessary procedure which would require you to skip your warfarin dose(s), we work with your physicians to best determine how to proceed.

Having in-person interactions assists greatly in assuring proper warfarin dosing, thus keeping a patient's INR in range. Each fingerstick appointment also provides you the opportunity to obtain an updated dosing card, which includes updated dosing spelled out for each day, as well as the date of the next INR check.

***Why wait in long lines at the lab or wait to receive a phone call with your INR result? Schedule a fingerstick appointment at one of our clinics!***

### **FRIENDLY REMINDERS**

- Call us with ANY diet or medication changes: whether a new medicine starts or if a medicine has stopped.
- Keep your medication list handy. We keep your records current.
- PLEASE CALL if you don't hear from us after your blood test. Your results may not have been received
- CALL ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC any time at 717-531-5312 or Toll-free at 1-800-243-1455, ext. 5312

## How Your Liver Affects Your INR

Do you know that the liver plays a key role in how your blood clots? The liver is actually the main location where the body makes clotting factors. With the help of vitamin K, the liver makes proteins that are important in blood clotting. It is also one of the organs that break down old or damaged blood cells. In other words, the liver's job is to make sure we don't bleed too much, or form an unplanned clot. Therefore, damage to the liver may cause problems in how blood clots. Without a healthy liver, you may be at a higher risk of developing a DVT (Deep Vein Thrombosis) or having uncontrolled bleeding. It is important to keep your liver healthy, and avoid conditions that may hurt your liver.

Here are some conditions that may cause liver damage:

**Cirrhosis** is chronic liver damage from a variety of causes leading to scarring and liver failure. Hepatitis and chronic alcohol abuse are frequent causes of cirrhosis. If you have cirrhosis, your liver may not be able to produce the normal amount of proteins and blood is not able to clot normally. When your doctor is evaluating the function of your liver, a *high INR* usually means that the liver is not working well because blood is not clotting correctly. **Some signs of cirrhosis include:** Yellowing of the skin (jaundice), fatigue, weakness, loss of appetite, itching or easy bruising due to decreased production of blood clotting factors by the diseased liver.

**Hepatitis** is inflammation of the liver. It may be caused by drugs, alcohol use, or certain medical conditions, but in most cases it is caused by a *virus*. This is known as **viral hepatitis**, and the most common forms are *hepatitis A, B, and C*.

**Hepatitis A:** People usually get hepatitis A from food or drink that is contaminated with a small amount of the virus sometimes found in fecal matter. This can happen when a person with hepatitis A infection goes to the bathroom, doesn't wash their hands and then handles or serves food. You should wash your hands every time you go to the bathroom and before handling or serving food and drink. Also, be sure to wash and rinse raw produce before eating or serving it.

**Hepatitis B:** People usually get hepatitis B infection through sexual transmission or IV drug use. Hepatitis B infection can be prevented by avoiding risky behaviors involving sex and drugs, and getting vaccinated. The hepatitis B vaccination is required for infants at birth, and additional vaccinations for adults are important.

**Hepatitis C:** Hepatitis C can be contracted only through direct blood contact. In the U.S., the primary mode of transmission is blood exposure through sharing needles. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine available for hepatitis C, but you can protect yourself by not sharing needles and syringes.

Here are some tips on how to keep your liver healthy:

Maintain a healthy weight  
Eat a balanced diet  
Exercise regularly  
Use alcohol responsibly

Avoid the use of illicit drugs and contaminated needles  
Practice safer sex  
Wash your hands  
Get vaccinated

## **GINGKO BILOBA and WARFARIN**

According to a recent study, it is estimated that 50% of Americans use over-the-counter dietary supplements, spending approximately 15 billion dollars per year. Medications considered to be “dietary supplements” can include herbs, vitamins, minerals, and probiotics, commonly stocked at pharmacies and grocery stores.

**Ginkgo biloba**, a dietary supplement, is one of the oldest living tree species and is found in fossils dating back 270 million years. It can be purchased over-the-counter and is proclaimed to treat a variety of conditions and illnesses, including memory problems such as dementia or forgetfulness, leg cramping, and “tinnitus” or ringing in the ears. Studies have found no benefits in using ginkgo biloba for these conditions. Many dietary supplements including ginkgo biloba may interact with warfarin, and in multiple case reports ginkgo biloba was linked to increased bleeding risk when used in combination with warfarin. This can cause a decrease in platelet formation and function, which normally help stop bleeding. Currently, it is unknown how much ginkgo biloba can increase your INR.

As a reminder, it is important to tell your Anticoagulation Clinic provider when medications are started, discontinued, or a dose is changed. When asked about your medications, don't forget to mention vitamins, dietary supplements and over-the-counter medications. Warfarin can interact with various medications that increase or decrease your INR, or increase your risk of bleeding. If you're taking a dietary do not switch brands because it could have different effects on your INR. By using a brand consistently your provider can better monitor its effects on your INR.

## **Not Too Thin, Not Too Thick, but Just Right!**

Planned and unplanned procedures and surgeries happen at some point in our lives. **It is important to remember that if you plan to have a medical or dental procedure of any type, whether big or small, you must notify the Anticoagulation Clinic as far in advance as possible so we can coordinate your warfarin therapy and follow-up.** It is also important to notify all of your providers (family doctor, dentist, eye doctor, specialist, dermatologist, etc.) that you are taking warfarin.

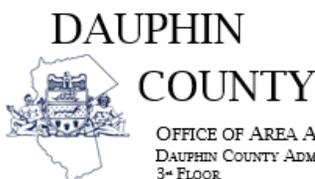
When a surgery is planned, there are steps you must take before the surgery to prepare your body as much as possible. Here at the Anticoagulation Clinic, it is our goal to have your INR at the correct rate, during and after surgery:

- If INR is too low, there is a risk of clots before or after your surgery
- If INR is too high, there is a risk of bleeding during or after your surgery

We will work together with your doctor or surgeon to determine a warfarin game plan just for you. The reason you take warfarin and the type of procedure will tell us whether or not to stop your warfarin, how long to stop it, and whether you need an injectable blood thinner (e.g., Lovenox®/enoxaparin) to prevent clots while you're not taking Coumadin. Injectable shots are called "subQ" and are administered into the fatty tissue of your belly at home. We'll teach you to give yourself the shots and answer all of your questions. Your INR must be monitored more frequently around the time of your procedure.

There are procedures that have a low-risk of bleeding and will probably NOT need you to stop warfarin beforehand. These may include: minor skin procedures/biopsies, routine dental work, extraction of 1-2 teeth and cataract surgery.

Just remember to inform your health care team, including the Anticoagulation Clinic of all medical or dental procedures so we can plan ahead so you can stay well and healthy. Even for low-risk procedures, your doctor and pharmacist must be aware of the details.



OFFICE OF AREA AGENCY ON AGING  
DAUPHIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
3<sup>rd</sup> FLOOR  
2 SOUTH SECOND STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17101  
(717)780-6130



## Are you new to Medicare? Do you have unanswered questions about Medicare?

Dauphin County APPRISE will be conducting

## MEDICARE 101

Seminars will be open to the public at the following locations:

Rutherford House Senior Center  
(3300 Parkview Ln. Hbg 17111)

Thursday 05/23/19 9AM  
Thursday 07/25/19 9AM  
Thursday 09/26/19 9AM  
Thursday 11/21/19 9AM

Mohler Senior Center  
(25 Hope Dr. Hershey 17033)

Thursday 06/27/19 9AM  
Thursday 08/22/19 9AM  
Thursday 10/24/19 9AM

Millersburg Senior Center  
(109 Edward Dr. Millersburg 17061)

Wednesday 09/25/19 11:30AM

These seminars will go over the basics of Medicare Parts A, B, C & D; comparisons between Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement Plans, and programs available to help save money!

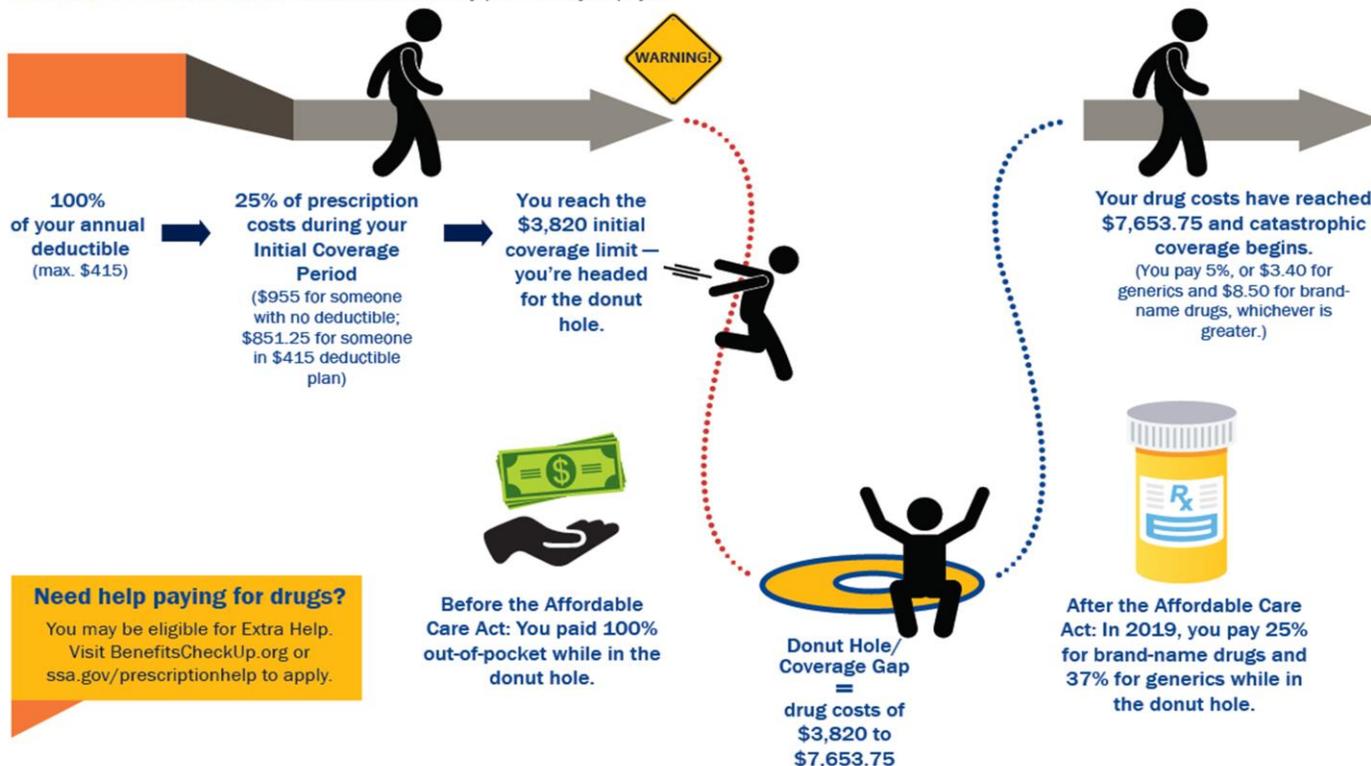
One on one appointments can be scheduled on site and may be available after the presentation for those interested in having medication comparisons done (bring your Rx list).

**☎ Questions, contact: Shannon Vallier, APPRISE Coordinator  
(717) 780-6130 Ext. 6147**

[www.dauphincounty.org](http://www.dauphincounty.org)

## MEDICARE PART D PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT IN 2019

**Medicare's Basic Benefit:** Besides the monthly premium, you pay ...



For more information, visit [ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org)

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### CANTALOUPE FRUIT SALAD

8 servings (9mcg of vitamin K per serving)

- 2 medium Cantaloupe, peeled and seeded
- 2 cups Pineapple chunks, fresh
- 1 cup Raisins, packed
- 1 cup Walnuts, chopped
- 1 medium Apple, peeled, cored and cut into small chunks
- 16 oz. Yogurt, vanilla

Mix cantaloupe with other fruits and walnuts in large salad bowl. Scoop yogurt into individual serving bowls. Pass the fruit salad and add to yogurt as desired. Stir to coat and enjoy!

### NUTRITION PER SERVING:

Calories	275
Fat	9.7 g
Cholesterol	2.0 mg
Sodium	51 mg
Protein	6.9 g
Carbohydrates	33.3 g
Fiber	2.9 g

Cancer Institute Retail Pharmacy  
717-531-1272  
Hours:  
9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday - Friday)  
9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Sat/Sun/Holidays)

UPC Retail Pharmacy 717-531-8094  
Hours:  
8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. (Monday - Wednesday)  
8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (Thursday - Friday)  
8:30 a.m. - noon (Saturday)  
Closed Sundays and Holidays

You can obtain a ninety-day supply of  
**BRAND NAME COUMADIN** at either of our  
pharmacies for only \$10.

CALL ANTICOAGULATION CLINIC any time at  
717-531-5312 or  
Toll-free at 1-800-243-1455, ext. 5312  
Email us any time:  
[anticoagulationclinic@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:anticoagulationclinic@pennstatehealth.psu.edu)

### REMINDER:

Fingerstick appointments available at both  
of our locations:

- 30 Hope Drive Hershey, PA 17033
- 121 Nyes Road Harrisburg, PA 17112

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Let us know of any  
topics of interest for our next edition.

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

**The Anticoagulation Clinic is now listed in the  
PATIENT PORTAL!**

**When accessing your records through the  
patient portal, look for the Anticoagulation  
Clinic listing in the area where you would  
communicate to providers. This is how to  
reach us there.**

**Why enroll in the Penn State Health Portal?  
Here are some of the many features of this  
system:**

- Use secure messaging with your care team
- Manage appointments: real-time scheduling available for select appointment types
- View test results
- Review medical history
- Renew prescriptions
- Manage family member accounts (with proper consent)
- Smartphone apps available for iOS and Android

**Visit [pennstatehershey.org/myhealth](http://pennstatehershey.org/myhealth) for  
details on how to use website features, and to  
log in to your personalized website.**

**Adherence Word  
Search- Answer  
Key**

P	I	L	L	B	O	X	P	B	F
H	A	E	D	R	P	E	H	F	R
O	C	A	L	E	N	D	A	R	I
N	D	C	T	A	L	A	R	M	E
E	F	S	K	K	G	H	M	I	N
L	I	S	T	F	A	J	A	R	D
Y	L	I	M	A	F	O	C	P	S
B	M	C	L	S	Q	L	I	A	M
N	S	V	X	T	Z	U	S	Y	W
B	E	D	T	I	M	E	T	A	T

## WARFARIN INFORMATION NEWSLETTER (W.I.N.)

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

### CONTACT US:

717-531-5312

(OR 1-800-243-1455 EXT. 5312)

Monday through Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

In case of emergency, please call 911.

### HOW ARE WE DOING?

Please send your comments to Lisa Barletta, MBA, R.Ph.  
([lbraccinibarletta@pennstatehealth.psu.edu](mailto:lbraccinibarletta@pennstatehealth.psu.edu)), Director of  
Pharmacy Outpatient Services

Editor: Amy Foltz, R.Ph.

Contributors: Carly Bryan, Pharm.D. Candidate 2019, Alaina  
Halter, Pharm.D. Candidate 2019, Lauren Schmidt, Pharm.D.