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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **UCSF LAUNCHES MEDICATION CONSULTATION SERVICE IN FRESNO**

The UCSF School of Pharmacy has launched a Medication Management Service in Fresno to address the urgent need among California Central Valley residents and their health care providers for assistance in managing their prescriptions.

The service will start scheduling appointments this week and will officially open for in-person patient consultations on September 1.

Through the program, patients will meet one-on-one with an experienced clinical pharmacist to evaluate the prescriptions they currently use, ensure the medications are safe and effective for them, and help them manage their daily drug regimens.

The service will include a complete medication review to identify any duplicate or unnecessary medication therapies, assess which medications are best for the individual patient, resolve medication-related problems and help patients adhere to their drug schedules. These consultations include advice on which over-the-counter drugs or herbal supplements might interfere with or enhance patients' prescription therapies.

Pharmacists also will help patients identify lower-cost solutions to their health needs, where necessary, and help low-income patients find and apply for medication assistance programs for which they are eligible. These programs help eligible patients get free access to medications.

"As patient advocates and UCSF faculty, we have heard many Fresno residents voice an unmet need for medication consultation services in the Central Valley," said Nancy Nkansah, PharmD, MBA, director, UCSF Medication Management Service, Fresno. "We decided to take the services we offer in other California cities to Fresno and to tailor these services to meet Fresno's needs."

Fresno currently has only four primary care clinical pharmacists with advanced training for every 100,000 residents, in an area with high levels of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. Nationwide, 24 million Americans have diabetes and in Fresno, one in 10 residents lives with the disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state statistics. Diabetes frequently occurs alongside other diseases, such as cardiovascular disease or hypertension, which leaves patients juggling multiple prescriptions.

"Managing medications can be a challenge for people who are taking multiple prescriptions on a daily basis," said Joan Voris, MD, who is associate dean at UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program. "This new service provides Fresno area residents with a valuable resource by making

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clinical pharmacists available to evaluate medications, help patients stick to a dosing regimen, as well as assist patients with obtaining medications at no or low cost.”

The program is the first of its kind in the Central Valley and will serve patients throughout the area. Medication management services have been recognized worldwide as a successful approach to helping patients manage, adhere to, and afford their medications, Nkansah said, but added that such services are often only found near academic medical centers or in isolated practices and are rarely accessible to the entire community.

As such, the Fresno service builds on the core mission of the UCSF School of Pharmacy to bridge gaps in patient care and serve underserved communities in California.

“This program represents a major step forward in managing chronic diseases in our underserved patients in the Central Valley,” said B. Joseph Guglielmo, PharmD, chair of the UCSF Department of Clinical Pharmacy. “Our goal is to help patients use their medications safely and effectively to treat, prevent, and cure disease, regardless of their income or where they live.”

The service will be by appointment only and will range in price from \$10 to \$60 per visit, depending on the type of service and the patient’s insurance. These fees are reduced by 67 percent through financial support from the UCSF School of Pharmacy, which runs the program.

Pharmacists also will advise health care providers throughout the Valley on medication options, as well as possible medication interactions for patients on multiple prescriptions. These health care providers, including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and physician assistants, will be able to refer patients to the service if needed.

Appointments with the UCSF Medication Management Service can be made online at <http://mms.ucsf.edu>, by sending an appointment request to [mms@fresno.ucsf.edu](mailto:mms@fresno.ucsf.edu) or by calling (559) 499-6511. Health care providers can download a referral form at <http://mms.ucsf.edu>.

Clinical Pharmacy is an approach that was created at UCSF in the 1960s and is now the professional standard internationally. In this model, pharmacists work as members of the health care team, share their drug expertise with physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and physician assistants, and work directly with patients to ensure patients get the best results from their medicines.

The clinical pharmacists who operate the UCSF Medication Management Service, Fresno are medication therapy and pharmacy patient care experts with doctoral degrees in pharmacy and more than 20 years of combined teaching and direct patient care experience. These pharmacists are also faculty members in the UCSF School of Pharmacy’s Department of Clinical Pharmacy.

In 2002, UCSF established a Pharmacy Education Program in Fresno to help address the shortage of pharmacists in the Valley. The program brings fourth-year students in UCSF’s top-ranked pharmacy school to the Fresno area to complete clinical rotations at hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and other organizations.

The UCSF School of Pharmacy is the nation’s premier graduate-level school of pharmacy, conducting advanced research in the field and providing clinical pharmacy services and advice to the local and extended community. For more information, please visit, <http://pharmacy.ucsf.edu/>.

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