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Knasas: Communication is key with drug coverage

By Marie Knasas/Ask-A-Nurse

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Question: Due to the high cost of my co-pays and the numerous medicines prescribed for me, I find that I just can't afford it anymore. I have type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure and take glyburide and metformin, two pills each twice per day and captopril three times per day.

I am cutting down how many pills I take by reducing the amount and times per day. Do you think this is OK?

Answer: Though you are having difficulty paying for your medication it is not a good idea to cut down on the amount of medication that the doctor has prescribed for your medical conditions. Adherence to the medications and the treatment plan which your doctor has prescribed for you is of up most importance in maintaining/improving your health.

You need to inform your physician that you are not taking the medications in the manner that was prescribed. This is extremely critical since the doctor expects that you are being compliant and following his prescription orders.

If you communicate with the physician he/she may be able to change the medications, frequency and dosages so that it is less costly. If you do not notify the physician then the physician may discover through his/her physical

examination that there is not improvement with the medications that were prescribed and come to the conclusion that more or new medications need to be added.

This would further complicate the situation you are experiencing with not being able to afford medications. There are some ways in which to get prescription drug coverage.

If you are receiving benefits from Medicare you can apply for Medicare part D coverage, which may help with the cost of the medications. Medicare prescription drug coverage is insurance that covers both brand-name and generic prescription drugs at participating pharmacies in your local area.

Medicare prescription drug coverage provides protection for people who have very high drug costs or from unexpected prescription drug bills in the future.

If you want more information on Medicare Part D coverage and how to apply visit www.Medicare.gov (source: www.Medicare.gov).

If you are uninsured and have no insurance, and are not eligible for Medicare, then the Massachusetts Health Connector can help you to get affordable health insurance. All citizens of the state of Massachusetts are eligible and required to have health insurance coverage based on income guidelines.

To get more information on the Massachusetts health care plans for which you may be eligible visit the Massachusetts Health Connector Web site at www.mahealthconnector.org.

If you are elderly, your local council on aging may be able to assist you in finding additional resources that are unique to the area in which you reside.

Maintaining one's health and taking the medications prescribed by the physician in the amounts the physician has ordered is essential to improving one's health. If you need to vary from what the physician has ordered then communication with physician is essential while also trying to access the resources that can help provide a payment for your medications.

If you have any questions you would like to see answered in this column please email askanurse@gmvna.com or write Ask-A-Nurse at Greater Medford VNA, 278

Mystic Ave., Suite 204, Medford, MA 02155.

— *Marie Knasas is the executive director of Greater Medford VNA. Greater Medford VNA has been your local provider of VNA services for over 100 years.*

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