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ONE OF MIAMI'S 12 COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

SEPT. 28 - OCT. 11, 2009

South Miami Pharmacy helps longterm care patients and seniors

BY LINDA RODRIGUEZ BERNFELD

When Yvette Jimenez Romanach was hired by South Miami Pharmacy she was the marketing director. But, after a year on the job working with the health care community, she realized that the pharmacy could serve the elderly both at the store and in assisted living facilities in a way that few pharmacies can afford to do.

So she went to pharmacy owner Armando Bardisa and, on her advice, he created a Long Term Care Department. Staff members at the South Miami Pharmacy have received special training on Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, and the store created a new section reserved for seniors. The personnel in the department go out of their way to help seniors, even filling out the forms from Children's and Family Services, which allow seniors to apply for waiver of prescription co-pay.

"Although their co-pays aren't too much, they add up when there are eight or 10 prescriptions," Romanach says. "We do it for them and then we give it back to them; they read it over and they have to sign it. They get an answer when they are back at home."

Romanach says the seniors are asked to bring the letter from Children's and Family Services back to the pharmacy, even if it's a rejection notice.

"We'll do the follow up and find out why," she says.

Along with South Miami Pharmacy's delivery service from Homestead to Broward and the pharmacy's mail order department, seniors are spared the need to go to the store if they have transportation issues.



YVETTE JIMENEZ ROMANACH

For the patients at the assisted living facilities, Romanach goes even further. She visits the facilities on a regular basis and goes over each patient's medications.

"We make sure the medication is given correctly," she says, adding that she is the go-between for the administrator and the pharmacist. "We'll look at the list of meds

they are taking and whether there is an interaction."

The idea is to help manage and improve the drug therapy to improve the quality of life for the patients.

To ensure another layer of efficiency and safety, each home is assigned a pharmacy technician the administrator can call if he has additional questions.

Romanach says they package the medications in a different way for the patients in the facilities so it's easier for the staff to double check the medications.

"We also deliver them two or three days before the beginning of the month," she says, adding that it gives the assisted living facility staff time to double check the meds before the beginning of the month.

Romanach has been known to make emergency visits. One administrator called her on a Saturday because she had a new patient that had come from a long hospital stay. The patient's family had brought not only the prescriptions the doctor in the hospital had written, but they also brought the drugs the patient had been taking at home. There were so many medications, the administrator needed help sorting them all out.

"I was able to go and the pharmacist was on the phone with us reviewing everything. That's one of the things we pride ourselves in, service," she says.

South Miami Pharmacy is located at 6233 Sunset Drive and a new building is under construction at 6050 South Dixie Hwy.

For information call 305-668-6150.