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CLINICAL DAILY NEWS

LTC operator adds genetic testing program to improve care for residents with complex needs

ALICIA LASEK

MARCH 31, 2022

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A national long-term care operator says genetic testing will help fine-tune medication management and reduce the potential for drug harms in a growing population of residents who require complex care.



Kandice Alcorn, MSN, RN

To that end, Portland- and Dallas-based Frontier Management Group has partnered with a pharmacogenetics provider to use genetic profiles to support its clinical decision-making.

Tesis Biosciences will serve as the genetic testing arm of the company's pharmaceutical management program for residents across 130 independent living,

assisted living and memory care facilities in 21 states. The new program will aid its efforts to safely manage medications for an increasingly frail population, Frontier told *McKnight's Clinical Daily*.

"Medications affect everyone differently," said Kandice Alcorn, MSN, RN, VP-Clinical Services. "Having pharmacogenetic testing readily available for the residents' physicians to assist with clinical decision-making only made sense to us as we continue to see residents with more comorbidities."

The program will help to pinpoint proper medications for individual patients and will analyze their genetic predisposition for metabolizing certain drugs in cases where more advanced treatment is needed, such as in cancer, or with neurological conditions including Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease, Tesis CEO Ron King said in a statement.

Informed clinicians

In such cases, Tesis' reporting mechanism may recommend another drug in the same class or a more efficient dosage of that medication, for example. It will also inform clinicians of drugs that may not interact well, the company said. The goal is to drive better medication efficacy, utilization, diagnostics and therapeutics, it said.

The program has a broad range of possible applications, Alcorn told *McKnight's*. It will help residents' clinical care providers to reduce the risk of weight loss or falls, for example, or more safely manage the behavioral problems that can accompany severe cognitive decline, she said.

With a physician's, resident's and/or caregiver's consent, "testing will be conducted as the resident's condition warrants, results communicated to the medical provider and implementation and ongoing observations of any changes made based on test

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results,” Alcorn said.

Frontiers considers the vulnerability of its residents when making decisions about new services and programs, Alcorn said.

“Our goal in everything we do is to provide an elevated life experience for our residents. This program will lend to making that difference,” Alcorn said.

Frontiers and Tesis are also planning to conduct a falls study with the aim of identifying potential associations between medications and falls and whether pharmacogenomic testing can be effective in aiding prevention.

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