

## “Reaching for the Stars – Advanced Roles for Pharmacy Technicians”

### Informatics

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## Conflict of Interest

- No conflicts of interest to disclose

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## Objectives

- Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians:
  - Describe the role of the pharmacy technician as a pharmacy informaticist.

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## Does your practice site utilize pharmacy technicians in informatics?

- A. Yes
- B. No

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## The Need

- Growth in:
  - Technology incorporation
  - Complexity of technology
- Regulations
- Has led to the need for:
  - Specially trained professionals

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## The Solution

- Pharmacists
  - Traditional approach
- Pharmacy Technicians
  - Equally important
  - Invaluable knowledge

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## Pharmacy Technician Informaticists (PTIs)<sup>1</sup>

- ASHP Statement on the Pharmacy Technician’s Role in Pharmacy Informatics
  - PPMI support
- Continues to evolve
- Main settings:
  - Institution
  - Corporate

## Pharmacy Technician Informaticists (PTIs)<sup>1</sup>

- Roles/Responsibilities:
  - Technology Management
  - Project Management
  - Education/Training
  - Reporting

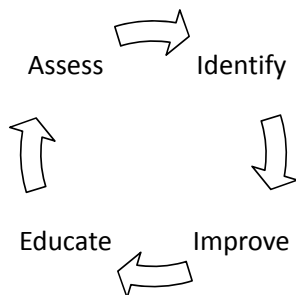
## Technology Management

- Troubleshooting
- Maintenance
- Electronic health record (EHR):
  - Order sets
  - Formulary management
- Other automation and technologies:
  - Barcode maintenance

## Project Management

- Evaluation
- Planning
- Implementation
- Communication

## Education/Training



## Reporting

- Continuous evaluation
- Optimization
- Advanced database management
  - Ex. SQL

### PTIs in the Present

- Most are home-grown
  - IT background
  - Experience
- Some specially trained
- Varied responsibilities

### PTIs in the Future

- Understand the need
- Continual role development
- Specialty training

### Summary

- Increased demand
- Evolving role
  - Specialized training
  - Increasing responsibilities

### What role(s) does a pharmacy technicians in informatics fill?

- A. Technology Management
- B. Project Management
- C. Education/Training
- D. Reporting
- E. All of the above

### References

1. ASHP Statement on the Pharmacy Technician's Role in Pharmacy Informatics. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. <http://www.ashp.org/doclibrary/bestpractices/autoitstptrolepharminform.aspx>
2. Maximizing the Value of a PT Informatics Specialist. Pharmacy Practice News. [http://www.pharmacypracticenews.com/ViewArticle.aspx?d=Technology&d\\_id=52&i=June+2014&i\\_id=1067&a\\_id=27585](http://www.pharmacypracticenews.com/ViewArticle.aspx?d=Technology&d_id=52&i=June+2014&i_id=1067&a_id=27585)

**“Reaching for the Stars – Advanced Roles for Pharmacy Technicians”**

**Exploring the Advanced Role of a Medication Therapy Management Clinic (MTMC) Pharmacy Technician**

Centrella Dunbar, CPhT  
Tiffany Scott-Horton, Pharm.D., BCACP

The speakers have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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**Pharmacist and Technician Learning Objectives**

- Discuss specific skills required for a pharmacy technician to effectively and efficiently complete daily task(s) in a Medication Therapy Management Clinic (MTMC)
- Describe the technician’s role within the outpatient pharmacy and MTMC and how to navigate each setting while maintaining an efficient workflow

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Do you work with technicians in an ambulatory care setting OR are you a technician working in an ambulatory care setting?

A. Yes  
B. No

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**Does your practice setting depend on technicians to maintain the workflow?**

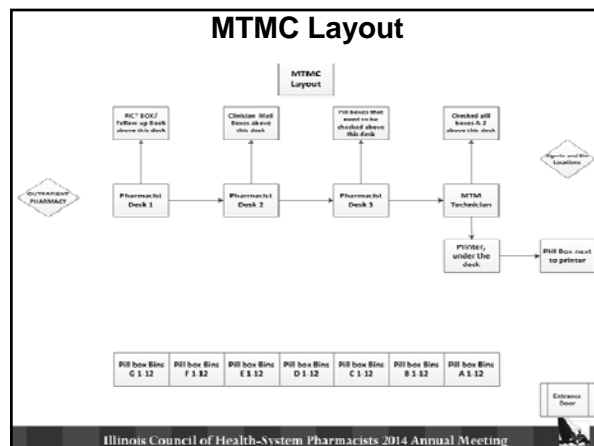
A. Yes  
B. No

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**Facility Description**

- Located in Outpatient Care Center (OCC)
  - Embedded in the OCC Pharmacy
- Hours: Monday-Friday 9AM-4:30PM
- MTM Staff
  - Clinical manager
  - Operations manager
  - 3 Full-time clinical pharmacist
  - 2 Part-time clinical pharmacist
  - 1 pharmacy technician
  - 1 pharmacy extern

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### Specific Technician Skills Needed to Work Effectively and Efficiently in MTMC

- Communication skills
- Multi-tasking
- Time management and organizational skills
- Medication filling and processing experience
- Comprehension of Medicare/Medicaid and how to navigate different insurance plans
- Detail-oriented
- Good memory\*\*\*

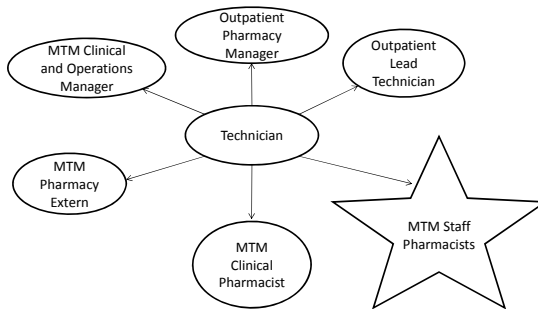
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### Navigating the Clinics

- Outpatient
  - Pharmacy System: PharmaServe
  - Direct contact: MTM staff pharmacists and lead technician
  - Primary activity: process and fill prescriptions
- MTM
  - Pharmacy System:
    - Cerner
    - PHS
  - Direct contact: MTM pharmacists (3)
  - Primary activity: working directly with MTM pharmacist to address medication needs

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### Technician Communication



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### Pharmacy Technician: Typical Day

Time	Activity
8-8:10 am	Sign-In and Print patient schedule
8:10-8:20am	Prepare all patient medication bags to be dispensed that day
8:20-8:30am	Complete point-of-care control test for glucometer
8:30-9:00am	Review MTM pharmacist binder for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miscellaneous prescription issues</li> <li>• Outstanding refills</li> <li>• Process all resolved prescriptions</li> </ul>
9:00am-11:30 am	Fill pill boxes
11:30-12:00 pm	Start prior authorizations

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### Pharmacy Technician: Typical Day (cont.)

Time	Activity
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00-2:00 pm	Finish prior authorizations and pill boxes
2:00-4:00pm	Process and fill medications for patients (~5-12 patients); 1 week prior to scheduled appointment
4:00-4:30 pm	Send out patient update and prepare for next day



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### Routine Visit Preparation: Role for Technicians

- Review Electronic Medical Record (EMR) 1 week prior to visit
  - Evaluate medication changes
  - Determine any recent hospitalizations
- Discuss any medication changes with technician
- Ensure all medication changes have appropriate prescriptions

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## Routine Visit Preparation: Role for Technicians

- Complete medication refill sheets
  - Call patient to verify “as needed” (PRN) medication refills
  - Process all medications – scheduled and PRN
  - Evaluate issues (refills, IHFS maximums)
- Phone call appointment reminders

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## Routine Visit Preparation: Role for Technicians

- Provide patient with cost of refills
- Process all patient medications 1-3 days prior to visit
- Fill Pill boxes
  - 20-30 minutes per pillbox
  - 2-6 pillboxes per day
- Update patient-friendly medication list for all patient's medications filled that day

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## Example Patient Friendly Medication List

**MIM** Medication Therapy Management Clinic  
 Ambulatory Care Pharmacy  
 University of Illinois at Chicago  
 540 South Wood St. MC 1184 Chicago, IL 60612

**UIC** UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
 CHICAGO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pharmacist: MIM Pharmacist  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Pharmacist: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies: NKDA Pharmacist: \_\_\_\_\_

Filled by: \_\_\_\_\_ Checked by: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason For Use	Medication	Prescriber	Description	When to Take and How Many		
				Morning	Evening	Bedtime
Hypertension	Ka # Hydrochloride 25mg	AMS	Round, Orange Tablet "Phila 22"	3 Tablets	3 Tablets	3 Tablets
	Hy # Metoprolol XL 200mg	AMS	Oval, White Tablet "41"	1 Tablet		
	Ka # Hydrochlorothiazide 25mg	Winy	Small Round, Pink Tablet "4871"	1 Tablet		
Cholesterol	Ka # Atorvastatin 40mg	Speedy	Oval, White Tablet "A1V 40"			1 Tablet
Depression	Hy # Cymbalta 30mg	Speedy	Blue and white capsule "244/30mg"	1 Capsule		1 Capsule
	Hy # Trazodone 100mg	Conceria	White round tablet "Phila 434"			1 Tablet
GERD	Ka # Nexium 40 mg	AMS	Oval purple Capsule "naxium 40"	1 Capsule		

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## Routine Visit Preparation: Role for Technicians

- Update patient insurance plans
  - Most recently: Illinois Department of Health and Family Services Care Coordination Expansion
    - Integrated Care Programs (ICP): Aetna, Meridian, etc.
    - Medicare Medicaid Alignment Initiative (MMAI): Aetna Better Health, Blue Cross Blue Shield, etc.
- Call patients to inform them of insurance changes
- Inform patients how insurance changes will affect their medication refills

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## Routine Visit Preparation: Role for Technicians

- Barriers to insurance changes
  - Many patients do not know or understand insurance changes
  - UIH pharmacies do not accept all current managed-care plans
  - Assist patients in transferring medications to pharmacy that accepts current insurance
  - Assisting patients in opting-out of auto-enrolled insurance plans

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## Routine Visit Preparation: Role for Technicians

- Maintain MTMC patient rooms weekly
  - Stock patient rooms with patient education
  - Ensure that the rooms have supplies
  - Notify cleaning staff:
    - Sharps container replacements
    - Specialized cleaning (scabies/bedbugs)
  - Order administrative supplies
- Maintain medication disposal areas

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### Additional Task(s) Affecting Technician Workflow

- Patient hospital discharge (~1-3 per week)
  - New prescriptions
  - Multiple medication changes
  - Fill or adjust pillbox
  - Updated patient friendly medication list
- Attend to walk-in patients
  - As-needed (PRN) medications
  - New prescriptions from physician appointments
  - Pillbox adjustments for medication changes
  - Refill diabetes medications and testing supplies as needed
- Process/fill prior-authorization approvals

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### Patient Case

AD is a 60 year old female that comes to MTMC for disease state management. She was admitted to UIH over the weekend for an urgent medical problem. At discharge she presented to MTMC to pickup her medications. The pharmacist noted that she had several medication changes. All new prescriptions were given to the technician to process. After the technician processed the first medication she realized that our pharmacy no longer accepted the patient's insurance.

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### How should we proceed?

- A. Send the prescriptions to an outside pharmacy
- B. Tell the patient to wait until we accept the insurance and that the medications aren't necessary right now
- C. Change the patients insurance to one we accept
- D. None of the above

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**The patient was due for refills and her pillboxes have been prepared but they do not reflect her current medication changes. How should we proceed?**

- A. Send her home with the medications that were already prepared in pill boxes
- B. Give her the pill boxes, tell her to take out what she does not need and tell her to fill only the new prescriptions at an outside pharmacy
- C. Complete medication reconciliation, remove unnecessary medications from her pill boxes, update her patient friendly medication list, have her pick up any new prescriptions at an outside pharmacy and educate her how to adjust her pill boxes with new prescriptions
- D. Reverse all prescriptions and transfer her medications to an outside pharmacy

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### Questions

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## ICHP Post-Test Questions

Presentation Title: **Exploring the Advanced Role of an Medication Therapy Management Clinic (MTMC) Pharmacy Technician**

**Presenters: Centrella Dunbar, CPhT and Tiffany Scott-Horton, Pharm.D., BCACP**

1. Which skill is essential for a technician working in the Medication Therapy Management Clinic (MTMC)?
  - a. Patient care skills
  - b. Communication skills
  - c. Therapeutic knowledge
  - d. Research skills
  
2. Which insurance plans should the technician understand in order to ensure the appropriate enrollment of patients into new managed care plans offered by the, Illinois Department of Health and Family Services Care Coordination Expansion
  - a. Healthlink
  - b. Medicaid
  - c. Medicare and Medicaid
  - d. Medication assistance programs
  
3. Which of the following is a component of the technician workflow?
  - a. Processing and filling prescriptions
  - b. Informing patients about insurance changes
  - c. Completing prior authorizations
  - d. All of the above
  
4. Pharmacy technicians are required to be detail-oriented. Which process requires the most attention to detail?
  - a. Updating patient friendly medication list
  - b. Reminding patient of an upcoming appointment
  - c. Providing patient the cost of their medications
  - d. Checking the pharmacy system for the last refill
  
5. The technician is required to navigate to pharmacy systems which include:
  - a. In-patient and out-patient pharmacy
  - b. Medication Therapy Management Clinic and Specialty Pharmacy
  - c. In-patient and specialty pharmacy
  - d. Medication Therapy Management Clinic and out-patient pharmacy



## Reaching for the Stars: Advanced Roles for Pharmacy Technicians

Discharge Pharmacy Services:  
Transitions of Care: A Technicians Role to  
Medication Access, Coordination and Delivery

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Speaker has no conflicts of interest to disclose

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## Learning Objectives Technicians and Pharmacists

- Recognize a non-traditional role a pharmacy technician can have as a liaison between the inpatient and outpatient pharmacy settings
- Explain how a pharmacy technician can help to improve healthcare utilization by ensuring a smooth transition at discharge to optimize medication adherence

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## Discharge Prescription Service: Goals

- ✓ Provide seamless transition from hospital to home by providing medication access, coordination and delivery in the best interest of the patient for continuity of care
- ✓ Improve transition of care for more critical patient populations to reduce hospital readmission
- ✓ Increase prescription capture rate and pharmacy revenue for our organization

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## Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Access

- Medication access is the key! A wise doctor was overhead saying, "what good is the best medication if my patient does not have access to it?"
- A recent study found that more than 20% of discharged patients had not filled their medications by their next scheduled follow up visit, which is generally 7-14 days after discharge
- Reasons for non-compliance were as follows:
  - ✓ Pharmacy wait times
  - ✓ Medication cost
  - ✓ Lack of understanding the necessity of the medication
  - ✓ Transportation issues

Kripalani S. et al. Mayo Clin Proc. 2008;83:529-535

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## Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Access

- What is Medication Access?
- What are some of the barriers to achieving access?
- What role can the pharmacy technician play to improve medication access for discharge patients?

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## Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Access

- Medication Access is the ability of the patient to receive their necessary medications
  - ✓ Ensure patients can obtain medication with or without insurance
  - ✓ Understand Prior Authorization, third-party billing and non-formulary limitations
  - ✓ Identify coverage issues and investigate options for alternative sources of coverage, for example; copay cards, medication assistance programs or private grants

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### Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Access

- Barriers
  - Insurance
    - ✓ Formulary
    - ✓ Prior authorization
    - ✓ Days/quantity supply limits
    - ✓ Insurance coverage limitations-Medicare, Medicaid, Private
    - ✓ Plan changes –“Obama Care” Medicare Managed Care Plans
  - Uninsured and “functionally uninsured”
  - COST \$\$\$\$

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### Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Access

- Pharmacy technician role
  - ✓ Identify prescription coverage
  - ✓ Collect necessary information at patient’s bedside
  - ✓ Facilitate the prescription process, identify and communicate any delays
  - ✓ Work with the discharge team to resolve identified coverage issues or prior authorizations needed
  - ✓ Refer uninsured and “functionally uninsured” patients to the UI Health Medication Assistance Program (MAP)

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### Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Coordination and Delivery

- What is the medication coordination and delivery process?
- What are the challenges in coordination and delivery of discharge medications?
- What role can the pharmacy technician play to improve medication coordination and delivery for discharge patients?

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### Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Coordination and Delivery

- The medication coordination process relies on accurate, effective communication with all parties involved in the discharge process
  - ✓ Communicate quickly by utilizing technology; smart phones, text pagers, group sharing apps, a shared discharge calendar and iPad
  - ✓ Be accountable by following through until the medication is delivered to the patient to ensure medication adherence
  - ✓ Provide a transition of care to the appropriate clinical service to promote the best outcomes for the patient and to reduce hospital readmissions

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### Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Coordination and Delivery

- Challenges
  - ✓ Incomplete discharge medication reconciliation by medical residents
  - ✓ Delay in receiving final discharge prescriptions
  - ✓ Copay issues
  - ✓ Impatient or restless patients
  - ✓ Waiting for a consult, test or lab results
  - ✓ Prior Authorizations or non-formulary issues
  - ✓ Family dynamic issues
  - ✓ Effective communication issues
    - ✓ Patient language barriers
    - ✓ A large interdisciplinary team
  - ✓ Transportation delays

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### Discharge Prescription Service: Medication Coordination and Delivery

- Pharmacy technician role
  - ✓ Facilitate prescription processing, identify and communicate any delays
  - ✓ Be accountable and communicate effectively
  - ✓ Know your limitations and give realistic delivery times
  - ✓ Communicate with the clinical pharmacist to ensure patient counseling is done prior to delivery
  - ✓ Discuss and collect payment for prescriptions from patient
  - ✓ Follow up within 2-3 weeks for prescription retention

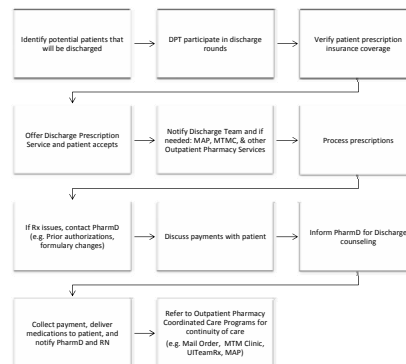
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## Discharge Prescription Service: Our Discharge Team

- Pharmacy
  - ✓ Inpatient clinical pharmacists
  - ✓ Ambulatory care pharmacists
  - ✓ Clinical pharmacists
  - ✓ Residents
  - ✓ DISCHARGE PHARMACY TECHNICIAN (DPT)
  - ✓ Ambulatory care pharmacy technicians
  - ✓ P4 students
  - ✓ Student externs
- Other healthcare providers
  - ✓ Attending physicians
  - ✓ Residents physicians
  - ✓ Consulting Physicians
  - ✓ Nurses
  - ✓ Discharge planners
  - ✓ Social workers
  - ✓ Financial case managers
  - ✓ Unit Clerks
  - ✓ Others

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### Discharge Prescription Technician (DPT) Daily Process



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## Summary:

### How can you fill this non-traditional role?

- A Pharmacy technician should;
  - ✓ Act as the liaison for pharmacy within your organization and build positive relationships
  - ✓ Employ your interpersonal skills to connect with the patient to improve their healthcare utilization
  - ✓ Understand insurance and stay abreast of changes in reimbursement that affect your pharmacy
  - ✓ Be a problem solver, find viable options
  - ✓ Be accountable and communicate effectively
  - ✓ Understand the importance of interdisciplinary concepts and dynamics for a outstanding program
  - ✓ Know your role in the process and your value to it's success

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## The duties of a Transition of Care Technician include which of the following:

- A. Refilling a Pyxis machine and attending discharge rounds
- B. Delivering medications prior to discharge and completing a prior authorization for a discharge medication
- C. Prepacking pediatric doses and coordinating delivery time with a patient's discharge nurse
- D. Referring a discharge patient to the Medication Assistance Program and scheduling a discharge patient for a follow up clinic visit

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## What are some of the goals of the Transition of Care technician?

- A. To increase prescription capture rate and pharmacy revenue for your organization
- B. To have the patient go over to the outpatient pharmacy and pick up their discharge medication
- C. To provide medication access, coordination and delivery for discharges patient to achieve continuity of care
- D. A and B are correct
- E. A and C are correct

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## Clara Gary's final thoughts and acknowledgements

- Why I love my job... 😊

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