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

Informatics

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Conflict of Interest

• No conflicts of interest to disclose

Objectives

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

Does your practice site utilize pharmacy technicians in informatics?

A. Yes
B. No

The Need

• Growth in:
  – Technology incorporation
  – Complexity of technology

• Regulations

• Has led to the need for:
  – Specially trained professionals

The Solution

• Pharmacists
  – Traditional approach

• Pharmacy Technicians
  – Equally important
  – Invaluable knowledge
Pharmacy Technician Informaticists (PTIs)¹

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

Pharmacy Technician Informaticists (PTIs)¹

- 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

- Assess
- Identify
- Educate
- Improve

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

“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.

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

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

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

A. Yes
B. No

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

MTMC Layout

[Diagram of MTMC Layout]
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***

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
  - Direct contact: MTM pharmacists (3)
  - Primary activity: working directly with MTM pharmacist to address medication needs

Technician Communication

Pharmacy Technician: Typical Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-8:10 am</td>
<td>Sign-In and Print patient schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10-8:20 am</td>
<td>Prepare all patient medication bags to be dispensed that day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:20-8:30 am</td>
<td>Complete point-of-care control test for glucometer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00 am</td>
<td>Review MTM pharmacist binder for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Miscellaneous prescription issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Outstanding refills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Process all resolved prescriptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 am-11:30 am</td>
<td>Fill pill boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:00 pm</td>
<td>Start prior authorizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pharmacy Technician: Typical Day (cont.)

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

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
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

Example Patient Friendly Medication List

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

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

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

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
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

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.

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

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

Questions
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 Technician’s Role to Medication Access, Coordination and Delivery

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Speaker has no conflicts of interest to disclose

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

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

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

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?

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
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 $$$

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?

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

Discharge Prescription Service:
Medication Coordination and Delivery

- 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)

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

- Discuss and collect payment for prescriptions from patient
- Follow up within 2-3 weeks for prescription retention
Discharge Prescription Service: Our Discharge Team

- Pharmacy
  - Inpatient clinical pharmacists
  - Ambulatory care pharmacists
  - Clinical pharmacists
  - Residents
  - Discharge pharmacy technician
  - P4 students
  - Student externs
- Other healthcare providers
  - Attending physicians
  - Residents physicians
  - Consulting physicians
  - Nurses
  - Discharge planners
  - Social workers
  - Financial case managers
  - Unit Clerks
  - Others

Other healthcare providers:
- Attending physicians
- Residents physicians
- Consulting physicians
- Nurses
- Discharge planners
- Social workers
- Financial case managers
- Unit clerks
- Others

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 an outstanding program
  - Know your role in the process and your value to its success

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. Preparing 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
E. A and C are correct

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

THE DISCHARGE PHARMACY TECHNICIAN (DPT) DAILY PROCESS

- Identify potential patients that will be discharged
- Verify patient prescription insurance coverage
- Offers Discharge Prescription Service and patient accepts
- Notify Discharge Team and if needed: MAP, MTMC, & other Outpatient Pharmacy Services
- Process prescriptions
- Ensure Phd’s for Discharge Counseling
- Ensure Phd’s for Discharge Counseling

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

A. To increase prescription capture rate and pharmacy revenue for your organization
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D. A and B are correct
E. A and C are correct

Clara Gary’s final thoughts and acknowledgements

- Why I love my job…☺️