Pharmacy Technicians in the Emergency Department: Medication Histories and Beyond

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Objectives

• Describe the scope of services a pharmacy technician provides as a member of the Emergency Department (ED) care team

• Identify the resources and training needed to implement pharmacy services in the ED
About South Pointe Hospital

- Cleveland Clinic Health System
- Licensed 179-bed, community, teaching acute care hospital
- Medical / Surgical, Intensive Care, ED, Surgery Center, Outpatient Oncology Center, Primary Care clinics
South Pointe Hospital
Department of Pharmacy Services

- 25 caregivers
  - 11 pharmacists
  - 1 PGY-1 pharmacy resident
  - 9 certified pharmacy technicians
  - management, automation and material management support staff
South Pointe Hospital
Department of Pharmacy Services

Pharmacist
Decentralized coverage of Intensive Care, Medical/Surgical units, and outpatient Cancer Center

Prescription Bedside Delivery Service

Technician
Traditional roles
(Unit Dose, IV Room)

24-hour
Inpatient / Outpatient

Decentralized Emergency Department Services
Background

• PPMI Recommendations – Advancing the use of pharmacy technicians
  - Initiation of medication reconciliation, including obtaining and documenting patients’ medication information for pharmacists’ review.
  - Reviewing patient charts to identify medication allergies that require pharmacist follow-up.
Previously demonstrated success with students and pharmacy technicians

- PPMI Case Studies
ED Program Overview

• **Hours of operation**
  - Monday – Friday 9:30am – 4:30pm

- **Patient presents to the ED**
- **Triage in waiting area and assigned to room based on severity**
- **Nurse completes intake**
- **Physician sees patient and determines whether patient is to be admitted**
  - Patient being **ADMITTED**

**Pharmacy technician**
1. completes medication history:
   a. Medication list
   b. Allergies
2. notifies patient’s RN when complete

**Patient’s nurse must review and sign off the completed list**

Notify pharmacy technician that patient is being admitted. The technician will see patient **within 30 minutes** of being notified.
ED Program Overview

1. Patient presents to the ED
2. Triage in waiting area and assigned to room based on severity
3. Nurse completes intake
4. Physician sees patient and determines whether patient is to be admitted

- Patient being DISCHARGED

- Notify pharmacy technician if the patient is getting prescription or OTC medications. Pharmacy technician will see patient within 10 minutes of being notified

- Pharmacy technician:
  1. reviews medication orders and offers to fill prescriptions or provide OTC medications
  2. notifies patient’s RN if patient will be waiting for medications

Wait time for prescriptions will depend on several factors including the number of prescriptions and access to patient’s insurance information.

Patients waiting for their prescriptions should be directed to the results waiting area (please do not send patients to the inpatient pharmacy).
Program Implementation

- Personnel, staffing, FTEs
- Tools and equipment
- Training and education
- Team integration
- Benefits
- Limitations and opportunities
Personnel, Staffing, FTEs

- 1 technician
- Monday – Friday, 8 hours/day
- FTE neutral
- Experienced technician
- Additional technicians trained
Tools and Equipment
Tools and Equipment
Training and Education

• Technician
  - Training manual and checklist
    • Open ended questions
    • Scripting
    • Policies and procedures
Interview the patient (and/or caregiver if applicable)

a. When entering a patient room complete the following
   i. Clean hands with foam hand sanitizer
   ii. Review and follow any isolation precautions if posted on the outside of the room

b. Follow the expected service behaviors
   i. Acknowledge the patient
   ii. Introduce self and role
   iii. Use a patient’s preferred name
   iv. Clearly communicate expectations
       For example:

       “Hello Mr./Ms. _____ . My name is ____________.
       I am a pharmacy technician working with your nurse and doctor. It is
       important that we know what medications you take at home and I would like
       to review this information with you now.

c. Use 2 patient identifiers: Ensure you have the correct patient by asking the patient
   state their name and date of birth and compare it to the medical record you have open
Medication list:

ii. For each medication collect the following information:
   1. Name
   2. Strength/Concentration
   3. Formulation (extended release such as XL, CD, etc.)
   4. Dose (milligrams, milliliters, puffs, drops, etc.)
   5. Route (oral, inhaled, topical, etc.)
   6. Frequency (how often?)
   7. Indication (why are you taking this medication?)
   8. Last time dose was taken (when?)
      a. It is not crucial to have the exact time; the information is only needed to determine when the next dose is due. So if a patient states they took a once daily medication yesterday, it is sufficient information to know that another dose is needed to be given today.

iii. Ask the patient if they have their own list of current medications
   1. If yes, review the list compared to what’s in EPIC and ask the patient about the differences

iv. If no, ask the patient to tell you what they take. Use open ended questions that allow the patient to give you more information.

“Please tell me what medications you take and how you take them”
g. When should you consider using secondary sources (not the patient) of medication information?
   i. Patient/caregiver states they don’t know/cannot remember information about the medication or cannot provide complete information
   ii. Patient seems confused, presents to the ED with a change in mental status, psychiatric condition or dementia and a caregiver is not available
   iii. Anytime you suspect the information the patient is providing is inaccurate

h. Secondary (non-patient) sources of medication information for a patient coming from home
   i. Ask a family member or caregiver (designated by the patient)
   ii. Contact the patient’s pharmacy
   iii. Call the patient’s primary care physician’s office
   iv. Use the prior to admissions medication tab

i. If a patient presents from a skilled nursing facility (SNF), that facility should be contacted for a copy of the patient’s medication administration record (MAR).
c. Discrepancies requiring follow up

Identify any medication list discrepancies. The following discrepancies will be reviewed with a patient’s nurse, pharmacist, or physician:

i. Missing medication (a medication the patient states taking is not listed)
ii. Obsolete medication (a medication the patient does NOT take at home is listed)
iii. Incorrect dose, route, frequency
iv. Therapeutic duplication (multiple drugs in the same therapy class are listed)

**NOTE:** The patient’s nurse must review and sign off the completed list.
Technician Training

- Train the trainer model
- Other sites shadowing
- Nurse shadowing
  - Isolation and infection control
  - Rapid response, code blue
- Outpatient prescription processing
- Direct pharmacist observation
Training and Education

- **Nursing education**
  - Staff meetings
  - Nursing huddles
  - Flyers

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**Your Pharmacy Technician Team**

- Pharmacy technicians will provide medication-centered services for patients seen in the emergency department
  - Complete medication histories for patients being admitted to the hospital
  - Fill discharge prescriptions and OTC medications for home-bound patients

- Hours: Monday – Friday, 9:30am – 4:30pm
- ED pharmacy technician can be reached at extension x40041
Team Integration

Been there,

Done that,

Got the T-shirt
Team Integration

Advocates

Recognition

Building Trust

Visibility
“My Patients”

Teamwork

Patient Access

Compassion
Program Benefits

- Accurate medication history
- Medication issue triaging
- Peripheral benefits
  - Resolution of other medication-related issues
  - Nurse resource
Program Benefits

• Expansion of bedside delivery service
  - 500 ED prescriptions in the first 6 months
  - Enhanced access
    • financial barriers
    • prior authorization
    • other 3rd party issues
Limitations and Opportunities

- Unpredictable workload of the ED
- Communication to admitting physician
Thank you

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  Pharmacy Informatics
- Ambulatory Pharmacies
Questions

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