Integrating a Pharmacist into your practice

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Learning Objectives

• Understand ways a practice might consider collaborating with a pharmacist.
• Demonstrate how to integrate a pharmacist into a practice.
• Describe different approaches to collaborating with pharmacists.
Assessment questions

• True or False- Pharmacists can complete residency training and may become board certified

• True or False- Embedding a pharmacist into your practice can help you meet practice metrics

• True or False- In order to integrate a pharmacist into your practice, it is necessary for them to see patients at the clinic
Assessment Questions

• Which of the following can a pharmacist do in a community practice protocol without direct consultation with the physician (per WV law)?
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Assessment Questions

• Pharmacists in a collaborative practice agreement with a physician may perform which of the following?
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  – Take and assess vital signs
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A pharmacist in my practice? Why?

- Americans will spend ~ $400 billion on medications by 2020
- 82% of people take one prescription medication daily
- 29% of people take more than 5 prescription medications daily
- Medication errors are the 3rd leading cause of death in America
- Pharmacists are the medication experts on the healthcare team
How can a pharmacist benefit my practice?

- Allows physicians to see patients with a higher level of acuity
- The Pharmacist can spend more time with complex patients
- The Pharmacist can help the practice meet patient metrics
- Some services may be billable
How can a pharmacist benefit my practice?

• Work with physicians to optimize drug therapy to achieve positive clinical outcomes
• Improve patient and care team education
• Improve patient medication adherence
• Streamline medication reconciliation and refills
• Provide effective, higher quality team-based care
Why Pharmacists?

Pharmacists are **experts** in medication therapy!

- Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy - minimum 5 years training
- Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree - minimum 6 years training
- Residency or fellowship - optional 1-2 years postgraduate training
  - Specialization in ambulatory/outpatient care
- Certifications - Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties
- Certificates - Immunization, Medication Therapy Management, Cardiovascular Risk Reduction, Diabetes, Tobacco Cessation, etc.

Pharmacists receive more education specific to medication use & management than any other health profession!
Ways to integrate a pharmacist into a practice

• Embed a clinical pharmacist into your practice

• Collaborate with a community pharmacist to evaluate patients in the pharmacy
What does it mean to embed a pharmacist?

Embedding a pharmacist means to *fully* integrate them into the care team. Pharmacists work closely with the physician and other members of the care team and they may also see their own panel of patients.

Clinical pharmacists are trained to help manage chronic diseases, and are experts in medication management and in identifying barriers to medication adherence.
What is this clinical pharmacist you speak of?

• Clinical pharmacists optimize medication therapy and promote overall wellness and disease prevention.

• Clinical Pharmacists are usually have the PharmD. degree with residency or fellowship training.

• The clinical pharmacist is educated and trained in direct patient care environments, including medical centers, clinics, and a variety of other health care settings.
Six STEPS to integrate Pharmacists into your team

1. Identify the roles pharmacists can play
2. Decide how your practice can benefit from including a pharmacist
3. Find your pharmacist match
4. Prepare and set expectations for your team and patients
5. Determine the resources the pharmacist needs and the impact on the physician’s workflow
6. Measure impact
Identify the roles pharmacists can play

• Pharmacists' roles vary in different practices
• Within an ambulatory care clinic environment, clinical pharmacists
  – manage chronic medical conditions
  – improve medication use and management
  – address medication adherence.
  – provide medication therapy evaluations
  – make recommendations to patients, physicians and other health care professionals.
Decide how your practice can benefit from including a pharmacist

- Your resources and needs will determine whether you hire a pharmacist and embed them in your practice or identify alternative ways to benefit from their skills, such as sharing an embedded pharmacist with another practice.
Find your pharmacist match

• It is important to find a pharmacist who shares your practice's vision.
• The pharmacist should have qualities you value in your practice
  – Experience in ambulatory care through residency/post-graduate training or in a patient-facing setting, such as another clinic
  – Training in or have a desire to learn patient care techniques, such as motivational interviewing, medication therapy management and/or complex care management
  – Empathy and compassion
  – Ability to communicate with ease using plain language with patients and clinical language with the care team
Prepare and set expectations for your team and patients

- Designate a physician champion who can explain to the team and other practice leaders the valuable role the pharmacist will play to enhance patient care.
- If you are planning to embed a clinical pharmacist within your practice, explain to the team exactly what this means by clearly defining roles and creating decision trees to lessen confusion and conflict.
- If you are planning to develop a relationship with a community pharmacist, offer guidance on your approach to sharing medical information and who on the team will be communicating with the community pharmacist about treatment plans.
How can I encourage patients to work with the embedded pharmacist

- Create an introductory letter or biography of the embedded pharmacist to share with patients.
- Display a picture and description of the pharmacist's services in the practice and/or on your practice's website.
- A quick "meet and greet" during a patient's visit with a physician can be the most influential approach to encourage patients to work with a new team member.
- Refer and schedule the patient for a separate visit with the pharmacist if needed.
Determine the resources the pharmacist needs and the impact on the physician's workflow

• Work with the pharmacist to determine their specific need for your patients.
• They will need a private space with a desk, a phone and EHR access.
• The pharmacist can take advantage of any open exam room that gives privacy.
• The pharmacist should be co-located with other team members and attend the daily huddle.
Measure impact

• There are various ways you can measure the impact of embedding a pharmacist within your practice. Some suggestions on what to measure include:
  – **Clinical outcomes**, such as improved blood pressure control or decreases in A1c levels for individual patients as well as the population as a whole
  – **Impact on process metrics for a selected population**; for example, improvement in nephropathy screening for patients with diabetes
  – **Monitoring/documenting medication changes** such as adding, discontinuing and adjusting doses of medications
  – **Improvement in medication adherence** measured by self-reporting or pharmacy claims data
  – **Decrease in medical and pharmacy costs**
What is Collaborative Practice?

“...the practice of pharmacy where one or more pharmacists have jointly agreed, on a voluntary basis, to work in conjunction with one or more physicians under written protocol where the pharmacist or pharmacists may perform certain patient care functions authorized by the physician or physicians under certain specified conditions and limitations.”

- Expands pharmacy services within state scope of practice
- **Written protocol** - collaborative pharmacy practice agreement (CPA)

West Virginia Board of Medicine. Legislative Rule. 11-8-2. Definitions.
Collaborative Practice Protocols

Together, physicians and pharmacists can develop protocols to optimize drug therapy to achieve clinical outcomes. Protocol options can include

• Identifying medications that are no longer needed (deescalating therapy), which leads to fewer medication interactions and side effects, and can reduce costs and save time.
• Modifying medication regimens based on lab values or other pertinent data
• Improving medication adherence by identifying and resolving barriers for patients.
Collaborative Practice Protocols

- Three types of protocols in West Virginia
  - Ambulatory Care Protocol
  - Community Practice Protocol
  - Hospital Practice Protocol

- Each protocol has specific requirements per West Virginia law

- Each protocol has to be approved by the appropriate licensing board with jurisdiction over the subject physician and pharmacist
Collaborative Practice… not so new

Healthcare delivery challenged by increased demands of
  - Further amplified by:
    - Increase in chronic care
    - Provider workforce shortage
    - Increase in access to care

Our nation spends the most on healthcare, but has the lowest outcomes

Pharmacists can **positively impact** all of these factors!
National Evidence: Pharmacists Improve Patient Outcomes

• Mean A1c decreased at all follow-ups and >50% improved at each visit
• Number of patients with A1c <7% increased at each follow-up
• >50% of patients showed improvements in lipid levels at every measurement
• Improved asthma control (FEV1) sustained over 5 years

• $4 saved for every $1 invested
• Costs shifted from inpatient & outpatient medical services to appropriate use of medications - significant improvements at each follow-up
• Total mean direct medical costs decreased by $1200-$1872 per patient per year from baseline

How do I decide what patients the pharmacist should see?

- You may wish to develop a list of patients who could benefit from pharmacy services such as those with polypharmacy needs, uncontrolled diabetes or hypertension or those requiring anticoagulation management.

- Work with your electronic health records team to create a list of all complex patients for the pharmacist to risk stratify.
How should I schedule the pharmacist?

- Initially, you will want to have the pharmacist physically in your office. This will help them develop relationships with patients, staff and other physicians.
- Start with fewer hours and build up.
- Consider scheduling pharmacist clinics for a half-day each week. As use increases, you can adjust the amount of time the pharmacist spends in the practice.
Can a pharmacist do virtual visits?

• Yes, pharmacists can perform Chronic Care Management which is often provided telephonically.
  – Medicare Part B fee-for-service program that pays providers for furnishing non-face-to-face chronic care management and coordination services each month.
  – Billed by the provider but is performed by the pharmacist
University of Michigan Health Services Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) pharmacists see on average 13 patients per day, with 45% of these visits occurring in the clinic and 55% in the form of phone consults.
Billable Services Provided by Ambulatory (Outpatient) Pharmacists

- Medicare Annual Wellness Visits
- Medication Therapy Management (MTM)
- PEIA Face-to-Face Diabetes Management Program
- Chronic Disease Management (CPA Preferred)
- Medication-related Monitoring (CPA Preferred)
Other Services Provided by Ambulatory (Outpatient) Pharmacists

- Chronic Care Management (CCM)
- Transitional Care Management (TCM)
- Drug Information Consultation / Decision Support
- Medication Consultation for Complex Patients
- Population Health Management
- Interprofessional Education
“Incident to” billing

- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) defines "incident to" services as those services that are furnished incident to physician professional services in the physician's office (whether located in a separate office suite or within an institution) or in a patient's home. This gives non-physician practitioners, such as pharmacists, a potential mechanism for billing for their services that relate to the physician's care plan.

- CMS guidance indicates that pharmacists can bill Medicare for services as "incident to" physician services if certain requirements are met. Services must be within the pharmacist's scope of practice as dictated by the state's Pharmacy Practice Act, among other requirements. Check with your local CMS carrier for guidance.
Other billing opportunities

- Annual Wellness Visits (AWVs)
- Transitional Care Management (TCM)
- Chronic Care Management (CCM)
Maximizing Your Pharmacist

- Implement automatic referral process for disease management
- Fully incorporate pharmacist into care team
  - Include pharmacist in provider meetings and huddles
  - Provide full access to the electronic health record (EHR) and other clinic resources
- Consider collaborating with a School of Pharmacy
- Consider sharing a pharmacist with another practice
Collaboration with a community pharmacist
Services Provided by Community Pharmacists

- Medication Therapy Management (MTM)
- Medication Synchronization
- Medication Adherence/Cost Consultations
- PEIA Face-to-Face Diabetes Management Program
- Enhanced services for chronic disease management
- Medication reconciliation post-discharge
- Screenings
- Immunizations
What is an Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Program?

- MTM programs focus on efficacy, safety and cost by improving medication use, reducing the risk of adverse events, preventing drug interactions, improving medication adherence and finding cost-effective treatment regimens.
- MTM is a covered benefit for all Medicare Part D beneficiaries who meet defined eligibility criteria.
- A pharmacist's services under MTM include annual comprehensive medication review and quarterly targeted medication review.
How can I collaborate with a community pharmacist?

• Select a pharmacist who supports the values of the practice and is willing to work with your patients

• Refer patients to that pharmacy for specific services (NOT to get their prescriptions filled)

• Accept and expect reports back from the pharmacist to become part of the patient records
Implementation steps for collaborating with a community pharmacist

- Work with your IT provider to share the patient medical records with the pharmacy.
- Give your patients copies of their chart or portions of their chart such as medication lists, visit summaries, lists of medical conditions and basic labs, to share with their community pharmacist.
In conclusion

- Integrating pharmacy services into your practice’s offerings can have numerous benefits for patients and providers alike. Providers will have the added support they need to improve adherence, medication reviews and patient understanding. Whether you achieve this by working with a pharmacy technician or a pharmacist, your practice should be able to deliver more effective, higher quality team-based care.
Assessment questions

• True or False- Pharmacists can complete residency training and may become board certified
  • True

• True or False- Embedding a pharmacist into your practice can help you meet practice metrics
  • True

• True or False- In order to integrate a pharmacist into your practice, it is necessary for them to see patients at the clinic
  • False
Assessment Questions

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Disclosure

• Much of the material for this presentation was adapted from the American Medical Association (AMA) StepsForward module “Embedding Pharmacists Into the Practice”
• The AMA is the creator of the content and it was used with their permission
• More information may be found at https://www.stepsforward.org/modules/embedded-pharmacists
Questions???