

International Conference on Clinical Pharmacy
March 24, 2007, Kyoritsu University of Pharmacy

Recognizing Opportunities for Clinical Pharmacy Services

Jane HENRY, MBA, R.Ph., FASHP
St. Francis Health Center
1700 SW 7th St.
Topeka, KS 66606
USA

1. St. Francis Health Center:
St. Francis Health Center, which was founded in 1908, is a faith-based hospital in Topeka, Kansas, USA. It has 378 beds and 14 Operating Rooms. The Pharmacist staff consists of: 13.5 Staff Pharmacists, 1 Clinical Coordinator, 1 Oncology Clinical Pharmacist, 1 Supervisor and 1 Director of Pharmacy. The Pharmacy department also has a Pharmaceutical Buyer, and a computer specialist in addition to the Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy Student Interns. St. Francis has a medical staff representing nearly all specialties, 16 operating rooms and operates 10 physician clinics. In 1987, it became one of the first hospitals in the USA to use bar code technology for medication administration to prevent medication errors and promote patient safety.
2. The role of the pharmacy Director:
The hospital pharmacy Director is important in promoting clinical pharmacy services. Hospitals in which the Director does not promote clinical services usually result in pharmacy departments that primarily dispense and distribute medications with no clinical services. Few hospital Administrators will request clinical pharmacy services without the encouragement and promotion of clinical services by the pharmacy Director.
3. Staff selection and development:
In order to be able to offer clinical pharmacy services, there must be pharmacists who are trained to practice clinically. The pharmacy Director should first hire a well-trained pharmacy Clinical Coordinator. This person is, ideally, a pharmacist who has completed a pharmacy residency program or has had extensive experience practicing clinical pharmacy. The Clinical Coordinator serves as a mentor to other pharmacists. The Director must recruit pharmacists who have had clinical training for all open pharmacist positions. She must also provide educational opportunities to existing staff pharmacists so that they can be trained for clinical services. This can be external education obtained through professional association meetings or shadowing pharmacists performing their duties at another hospital with clinical services, internal education and shadowing at the hospital, or a combination of both. The Director should encourage the clinical pharmacists to have frequent clinical meetings and sharing among themselves so that they can learn from one another's experiences. In designing competencies for the staff, the Director should include clinical competencies that challenge the staff and promote growth in its clinical knowledge base. She should also encourage staff to seek Board Certification and Residencies to enhance their knowledge and confidence.
4. Building relationships:
The pharmacy Director should encourage building relationships with other healthcare professions. Clinical pharmacists' successful collaboration with physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals reinforces the value of clinical services. Through that successful collaboration, the pharmacy gains support from those other healthcare professionals who will in turn request and help to promote clinical pharmacy services

with their peers and with Hospital Administration. The pharmacy Director can also build relationships with other healthcare professionals through involvement on multi-disciplinary committees. Patients who have received good care from clinical pharmacists can also become advocates for expanded clinical services. They may request clinical services during future admissions to the hospital or tell their friends who may do likewise if they become inpatients.

5. Identifying opportunities:

The pharmacy Director can find support for expanded clinical pharmacy services from sources outside of the hospital. Expanded accreditation standards from organizations like the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) can present an opportunity for expanded clinical involvement by pharmacists. A number of recent JCAHO national patient safety goals involve the medication management process and are opportunities for enhanced pharmacist involvement with patient care. Government regulatory agency requirements can also present an opportunity for more clinical pharmacy involvement. Third-party payer requirements may also present opportunities for expanded clinical pharmacist involvement.

6. Promote to hospital administration:

The pharmacy Director should promote the expanded role of clinical pharmacists to the hospital administration. Since major areas of responsibility for administrators are safe, quality patient care, meeting regulatory and accreditation requirements and increased profitability, these are all good areas on which the Director can focus. If involvement of clinical pharmacists can help the hospital to meet or exceed established safety and quality standards, the Director should promote that to Administrators. Likewise, if clinical pharmacist services can serve to meet accreditation or regulatory requirements, the Director should demonstrate that to Administrators. Lastly, enhanced clinical pharmacist involvement may serve to decrease the cost of medication therapy used or hasten the patient's recovery and their discharge from the hospital. Both of these can increase the profitability to the hospital.

7. Collect data and promote success:

Once clinical pharmacy services are implemented, the Director must collect data to demonstrate its success and ensure its continuation. Is safer medication use occurring because of clinical pharmacist involvement? Are regulatory standards and requirements being met, or met more easily, because of it? Are expenses lower or revenue higher due to the intervention of clinical pharmacists in the patients' medication use process? Not only must the Director share the data collected on the clinical services already in place, but she must also continue to look for new and expanded opportunities for expansion of clinical services. She needs to keep current on new regulations and standards as well as new medications that may require pharmacist involvement to promote their safe and appropriate use.

8. Training pharmacy students:

Once a hospital has developed a successful clinical pharmacy program, it is important to bring pharmacy students in to learn about it. This can serve to demonstrate to pharmacy students that a clinical pharmacy program can be achievable, can enhance the quality and safety of patient care, and help to meet hospital goals for regulations or profitability. Students can be mentored by clinical pharmacists who have developed a greater job satisfaction through clinical involvement with the patients and working together with others on the healthcare team. Students can see how their actions as a clinical pharmacist can impact the lives of their patients in a very meaningful way. This can then encourage students to seek employment as clinical pharmacists when they complete their education.