



ROLE OF PHARMACISTS IN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 50 years, the role of pharmacists has evolved along with the health care needs of our population. In addition to dispensing medications and ensuring patient safety, today's pharmacists are taking a larger role as medical counselors, educators and advocates. They are integral part of the health care team, and are among the most trusted and accessible health care professionals. This accessibility allows them to perform more patient care activities, including counseling, medication management, and preventive care screenings. Beyond the care provided to individual patients, pharmacists have expanded their reach to influence the public health of communities. A pharmacist is uniquely positioned to provide disease state management through appropriate medication therapy management that has been demonstrated to improve patient outcomes and decrease overall health care costs. This role is more important than ever as the environment is demanding new practice and payment models that are required to further optimize care and outcomes while addressing the unsustainable increases in health care costs.

Keywords: Drug Interaction (DI); Health Management Organizations (HMO); Over the Counter (OTC) Drugs; Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI); Patient Compliance

1. BACKGROUND

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (WHO, 1946). In contrast to medicine, public health initiatives “emphasize the prevention of disease and the health needs of the population as a whole.” Health services

focus on the well-being of the population as a whole and emphasize the assessment and prioritization of a community's health-related needs as well as planning to address those needs. Such services include working with community representatives in identifying health-related community problems; setting community health