

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH POLICY FORUM

Medication Therapy Management & Pharmacy Quality Measurement

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Bridging the gap between the way patients' drug therapy is currently managed to the way that it should be provided is a challenging task. In 1990, Hepler and Strand proposed a new model, "Pharmaceutical Care" (PC), to address the increase in drug-related morbidity and mortality in the U.S. Dave Domann, MS, RPh, Senior Director of Healthcare Quality Management at Ortho-McNeil Janssen Scientific Affairs, discussed PC, which is a process that essentially involves the patient, the pharmacist, and other health care professionals in:

1. identifying potential and actual drug-related problems,
2. resolving actual drug-related problems and
3. preventing potential drug-related problems where the pharmacist accepts the responsibility in producing the specified therapeutic outcomes.

The principles of PC have been referred to as standards for pharmacy practice. Numerous studies, in addition to the Asheville Project described by Mr. Domann, have demonstrated positive effects of PC in improving patients' clinical outcomes and health-related quality of life. Mr. Domann explained that according to CMS, Medication Therapy Management (MTM) programs must be provided to Medicare Part D beneficiaries, and can be accomplished by means of a letter, phone call, or live pharmacist consultation. Core elements of MTM are medication therapy review, personal medication record, medication action plan, intervention and/or referral, documentation, and follow up.

With the implementation of MTM programs, the need arose to measure the outcomes; this partly led to the founding of the Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) in April, 2006. The mission of PQA is to measure performance at the pharmacy and pharmacist levels, collect data, report information to key stakeholders to help make informed choices, improve outcomes, and stimulate the development of new payment models. PQA endorsed 34 quality indicators for development across eight categories. The development of a quality measurement approach is underway. As the practice of pharmacy under-

goes a transformation from mainly drug dispensing to providing pharmaceutical care, the main challenge will be to address the structural issues related to payment models.

To learn more about MTM and PQA, please visit the following sites:
<http://www.pharmacist.com>, <http://www.pqaalliance.org>