Entry-Level Competencies Needed for Community Pharmacy Practice

Based on the work of a joint NACDS Foundation-NCPA-ACPE Task Force

Spring – Summer 2012

Introduction

Community pharmacy practice employs more pharmacists than any other segment of the profession. The majority of pharmacy graduates pursue careers within community pharmacy and thus it is imperative that the schools and colleges of pharmacy prepare students with the competencies and skills needed for current and future roles in community practice settings. While the majority of pharmacy graduates will be employed by a local, regional or national multi pharmacy organization, there are still a significant number of independent pharmacies which may require competencies specific to this practice setting.

A pharmacist practicing in a community practice setting needs to possess competencies in the areas including pharmacist-delivered patient care (i.e. medication therapy management), public health, communication, dispensing systems management, business management, pharmacy law, and leadership.

Process

In 2012, at the request of the Accreditation Council on Pharmacy Education (ACPE) a Taskforce was convened consisting of members from each organization (NACDS and NCPA) for the purpose of developing a set of competencies desired for entry-level pharmacists (pharmacists graduating with a PharmD degree) practicing in a community pharmacy for now and in the future. The task force acknowledges that many initiatives are underway, and recommendations below are intended to highlight and build off of the great work ACPE and the nation’s schools and colleges of pharmacy are currently undertaking. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) Center for Advancement of Pharmaceutical Education (CAPE) is acknowledged for Educational Outcomes that provide a framework for determining a set of entry-level competencies for community pharmacy practice. The CAPE Outcomes address Pharmaceutical Care, Systems Management and Public Health.

Following an initial planning meeting via conference call, taskforce members from NACDS and NCPA independently developed a set of competencies felt to be required of a new PharmD graduate entering community pharmacy practice. Each organization solicited broad based input from their respective memberships before finalizing their respective list of competencies. The two lists of competencies were then merged into a combined set of competencies. A conference call was convened to discuss the combined
summary soliciting agreement and suggestions for any deletions or additions to the list. Staff from the two organizations then met to develop a final set of competencies for new PharmD graduates entering community pharmacy practice. Both organizations had one final opportunity to review and edit prior to this final document being prepared.

Results

The following entry-level competencies are recommended by NACDS and NCPA for community pharmacy practice:

**Pharmacist-Delivered Patient Care**

*General: Today’s ACPE standards cover clinical knowledge/scope well; new graduates, however, often have a gap in their ability to apply their skills in community settings and be practical with the information they have learned in school and how that information translates to a specific patient.*

*Each entry-level graduate should be able to:*

- Demonstrate strong clinical skills and provide direct patient care services
- Medication Therapy Management
  - define and appropriately document comprehensive MTM services
  - conduct a patient interview and provide education
  - conduct comprehensive medication review
  - identify and resolve medication therapy problems, manage drug interactions, and resolve gaps in care
  - recommend therapeutic alternatives and generic substitutions
  - document services and follow-up with other health professionals
  - use multiple MTM platforms as required by third party payers
- Support and assist patient behavior change
- Proactively identify and resolve patient-specific barriers to medication adherence
- Complete physical assessments and make appropriate recommendations or referrals
- Describe personalized medicine and apply an individual patient’s genetic profile to the selection and modification of a medication regimen
- Demonstrate knowledge of specialty pharmaceuticals, and support patient adherence and administration of this growing category of medications
- Describe and apply clinical practice guidelines to patient care
- Facilitate patient self-administration of medications and disease monitoring
- Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate administration technique for dosage forms commonly dispensed in community pharmacy
- Proactively assess and resolve issues related to medication safety
- Describe common doses of drugs requiring monitoring and collaborative drug therapy management
- Proactively perform counseling and medication education which complies with OBRA-90
Public Health

*General:* Public health is now included in the ACPE Standards. Pharmacists’ role in public health is becoming more important, especially with the increase in screening, testing, prevention, and counseling pharmacists are performing which will expand in the future.

Each entry-level graduate should be able to:

- Clinical Application of Public Health Policy:
  - discuss the pharmacists role in education and intervention in public health initiatives applicable to pharmacy practice
  - collect, interpret, and make recommendations based on the results of health and wellness screenings and diagnostic tests
  - describe the need for CLIA-waiver and describe documentation of testing done in the community pharmacy
  - proactively assist with patient self care, including helping patients make appropriate selections of OTC medications and dietary supplements
  - proactively promote healthy lifestyle and nutrition and describe how it impacts drug therapy and overall health
  - describe the role of a pharmacist in emergency management
- Immunization:
  - be certified to administer immunizations (preferably early in curriculum to allow for practice and utilization during the professional program)
  - describe the vaccine information statement (VIS), the vaccine adverse events reporting system (VAERS), and state vaccine registries

Communication Skills

*General:* Strong oral and written communication skills are an underlying theme throughout all recommendations and are critical to providing effective patient care, collaborating with other health professionals, and leading the medication management team. This must start with an emphasis on communication skills in the pharmacy school admissions process, with a focus on identifying students with the potential to develop strong interpersonal skills.

Each entry-level graduate should be able to:

- Health Literacy:
  - determine patient level of health literacy by observation or interview, appropriately adjust counseling delivery, and to communicate at all levels of health literacy
  - solve adherence challenges created by low health literacy
Patient communications:
  o support patient behavior change and self-efficacy through skills such as motivational interviewing
  o demonstrate a respect for patient confidentiality and privacy rights
  o demonstrate patient compassion and empathy

Health professional communications:
  o effectively function as part of a team engaged in interprofessional, team-based care
  o document appropriate therapeutic recommendations related to medication therapy in the Electronic Health Record (EHR) or similar platforms

Drug information skills:
  o when given a drug information question, access and utilize appropriate drug information resources and provide an accurate and credible solution in both written and oral forms
  o develop a variety of drug-related reports, monographs, reviews and policies using drug literature evaluation skills
  o evaluate appropriateness of clinical trials and other study designs, including validation of methodology and assessment of data credibility
  o access appropriate drug information resources required for patient education

Medication management team communications:
  o identify and manage conflict at all levels
  o supervise and motivate employees
  o delegate appropriate tasks
  o effectively articulate team objectives and measure and report team performance

Dispensing Systems Management

General: While pharmacists are performing more direct patient care services like MTM, health screenings, counseling and education, dispensing continues to be an area for which the pharmacist must continue to have responsibility for oversight.

Each entry-level graduate should be able to:

  • Extemporaneous Compounding:
    o perform basic, non-sterile compounding

  • Supply Chain:
    o describe the pharmaceutical supply chain and anticipate, identify and troubleshoot problems with the supply chain
o oversee and effectively manage the drug procurement process

• Operations:
  o outline typical pharmacy dispensing workflow
  o comprehend and adopt a given set of pharmacy operating procedures
  o comprehend and adopt an existing collaborative drug therapy management agreement
  o evaluate prescription for legitimate medical use, and appropriate dose
  o describe the roles and responsibilities of each pharmacy staff member
  o describe dispensing processes when pharmacy automation is utilized

• Quality:
  o describe the concepts of quality measurement and improvement
  o apply national standards/guidelines/best practices
  o develop a plan for quality/performance improvement

• Pharmacy Technology
  o describe the role of computerized pharmacy management systems in dispensing
  o dispense prescriptions utilizing technology-assisted workflow
  o describe the role of pharmacy robotics, point of sale systems and electronic signature capture
  o describe the EHR and the role and responsibilities of a pharmacist who has access to a certified EHR.

Business Management

General: Didactic coursework in business management should be taught by pharmacists currently working in a variety of practice settings.

Each entry-level graduate should be able to:

• Lead the operations of a community pharmacy practice site and to:
  o manage inventory costs and inventory levels or order points
  o identify cash flow problems and apply solutions to address
  o develop a sound business plan for clinical service programs
  o describe basic finance terms and analyze a financial statement
  o apply health care economics and pharmacoeconomics
  o describe strategies for asset protection and safety
  o effectively use pharmacy technology including:
    ▪ automated filling systems
    ▪ prescription processing systems with contemporary features

• Understand and communicate managed care / drug coverage policies and to:
  o explain the purpose/function of a PBM and the general concept of managed care
o discuss general concepts associated with the benefit structure of a health plan, including co-pay vs. co-insurance, premium vs. deductible and maximum out of pocket costs
o outline general provisions of Medicare Parts A, B, C and D, and Medicaid, including enrollment and other payment programs
o provide guidance to patients seeking assistance to apply for drug payment programs
o troubleshoot denied claims
o discuss the concept of drug utilization review, formulary management and provide functional definitions of key managed care strategies (e.g., prior authorizations, step therapy, quantity limits)
o identify major factors that contribute to prescription drug related fraud and abuse

Leadership Abilities

General: All pharmacy graduates should be self-directed, lifelong learners who are motivated to embrace emerging clinical services.

Each entry-level graduate should be able to:

- Display confidence in the patient care skills learned in pharmacy school
- Demonstrate professional behavior (attitude, dress, appearance, etc.) in practice settings
- Embrace and advocate changes that improve patient care

Legal Considerations

General: Pharmacists will need to continue to have a good understanding and be able to practice in a manner that complies with state and federal laws as well as professional ethics.

Each entry-level graduate should be able to:

- Understand laws and regulations that impact pharmacy practice
- Understand other state and federal rules and regulations affecting legal operation of a pharmacy.
- Identify issues, pending legislation and regulations across all levels of government and how to make a positive impact
- Understand professional ethics as they apply to the practice of pharmacy
- To apply knowledge and understanding of all legal and ethical aspects of pharmacy practice required to evaluate a patient care decision
Other Recommendations

In addition to the competencies listed above NACDS and NCPA would also like to make recommendations to both NABP and AACP as follows:

**Recommendations for schools and colleges of pharmacy (AACP)**

The schools and colleges should create an environment that fosters respect by faculty and staff of all areas of pharmacy practice and where all opportunities available to students are promoted. The faculty composition should reflect all areas of pharmacy practice including community pharmacy practice. A diverse array of elective opportunities, both didactic and experiential, should be available to provide students with exposure to growing areas of pharmacy practice. The experiential education program needs to focus on standardized training for preceptors to assure uniform and appropriate feedback and assessment of all students. The evaluation and assessment of students in the experiential component of the curriculum should be standardized across all schools and colleges of pharmacy to assure consistency, rigor, and validity. The IPPE and APPE experience needs to be consistent across sites requiring schools and colleges to develop and adopt rigorous quality assurance programs in experiential education.

**Recommendations for NABP**

ACPE needs to work with NABP and state boards to promote uniform immunization guidelines for pharmacy interns early in the curriculum. NABP needs to promote harmonization of intern licensing requirements. Furthermore NABP needs to include as part of NAPLEX a method to evaluate communication skills.
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