

Message from the New Practitioners Forum Executive Committee – October 2009



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October is American Pharmacists Month! It is a time to celebrate the profession and the contributions pharmacists make to patient care. Pharmacy practice has evolved over the years creating roles for pharmacists in almost every area of medicine; however, despite our continued dedication to ensuring the safe and effective use of medications, pharmacist efforts often go unnoticed.

Many people still believe that all pharmacists do is count, pour, lick and stick, and some have no idea that there are pharmacists, or even pharmacies, in hospitals and health systems. Aside from those pharmacists who participate in medical rounds or provide direct patient care in ambulatory settings, most work behind the scenes. Few patients realize that every prescription they receive is first reviewed by a pharmacist for the appropriateness of the drug, dose, frequency and route of administration; therapeutic duplications; potential toxicities; drug interactions; and other contraindications prior to dispensing the medication and that this prospective review is considered mandatory by healthcare accreditation agencies in order to prevent adverse drug events.

Pharmacists have slowly but surely become essential members of the interdisciplinary healthcare team. It used to be that physicians were the only ones recognized for providing patient care. Millions of Americans watch intently each week as physicians save lives on shows such as House, Grey's Anatomy, and Private Practice. Now nurses are enjoying being in the limelight too. The recent nurseapalooza has allowed Americans to see healthcare from the nurse's perspective with shows like Nurse Jackie, HawthoRNe, and Mercy. Interestingly, none of these shows involve pharmacists.

Whether patients realize it or not, pharmacists are essential members of the healthcare team.

October 18-24 is National Hospital and Health-System Pharmacy Week, an ideal time for pharmacy departments to acknowledge their achievements and share their accomplishments in medication safety with patients, other healthcare providers, and the community. ASHP provides a variety of resources on their website to assist with

planning and preparation including ideas to try, publicity tools, and patient handouts.
<http://www.ashp.org/Import/PRACTICEANDPOLICY/PracticeResourceCenters/PublicRelations/HealthObservances/HealthSystemPharmacyWeek.aspx>

It's time for patients to see healthcare from a pharmacist's prospective, so how are you going to tell your story?