

Reimbursement for Pharmacist Services Elevator Speech

Suggested Talking Points

Hi, my name is (insert name) and I'm currently a (insert profession: pharmacist, resident, student, pharmacy technician) at (insert: workplace, school, residency program) in (insert: state, city).

Over the years, pharmacist roles have evolved past the traditional activity of medication dispensing. Pharmacists, in all practice settings, participate in direct patient care activities which have been shown to have positive impacts on disease outcomes, quality of care, access to care, and patient safety.¹ However, legislation, policy, and limited reimbursement restrict the positive impact that pharmacists can have on patient care.

1. What services are pharmacists providing that are not reimbursable?

- a. Examples of pharmacist-provided patient care services with limited or no reimbursement include point-of-care testing, patient assessment and evaluation, medication therapy management, chronic care management, transitions of care management, patient education, counseling, and prescribing via collaborative practice agreements, all of which serve to improve patient care and outcomes.
- b. As medication experts, pharmacists are especially skilled at optimizing medication regimens to ensure patients are taking the right medications at the right doses, and in the right ways, maximizing the effectiveness of medications to better control chronic conditions and keep patients out of the hospital.

2. How does this impact patients?

- a. Many of the expanded services offered by pharmacists serve to increase access to healthcare, especially for those with limited access. For example, in several states' pharmacists have protocols to prescribe therapies such as hormonal contraceptives, pre-exposure prevention for HIV, and COVID-19 antivirals to increase access to these crucial medications. The use of these protocols is limited by a lack of reimbursement.
- b. For now, many of these services are utilized by patients who are paying out of pocket cash prices, which creates barriers for underserved populations and continues to worsen the health equity gap.
- c. Lastly, lack of reimbursement for medication dispensing and expanded patient care activities has led to pharmacy closures, which disproportionately impacts rural communities where local pharmacies may be the most accessible healthcare providers.²

3. What steps must be taken to reimburse pharmacists? Have there been any successes already?

- a. Recognition of pharmacists as healthcare providers through national policy would be a big step in allowing for reimbursement of patient care services.
- b. There are several states that compensate pharmacists for healthcare services like other non-physician practitioners. Additionally, contracts between individual pharmacies and health plans are becoming an increasingly common method to reimburse pharmacists. However, these strategies are limited, and not all patients benefit from access to these services which is why policy changes can make a big impact.

I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me today. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have (exchange business cards).

Remember:

- No pharmacy lingo
- Keep it short (90 seconds)
- Answer any questions and follow up if needed
- Always follow-up with a thank you note

References:

1. Chisholm-Burns MA, Kim Lee J, Spivey CA, et al. US pharmacists' effect as team members on patient care: systematic review and meta-analyses. *Med Care*. 2010;48(10):923-933. doi:10.1097/MLR.0b013e3181e57962
2. National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA). The Impact of Recent Medicare and Medicaid Cuts on Patients' Access to Independent Community Pharmacies. <http://www.ncpa.co/pdf/leg/oct11/pharmacycutsfinal.pdf>

This resource was developed by the ASHP New Practitioners Forum Practice Advancement and Advocacy Advisory Group, which is providing members the opportunity to share resources that might assist in professional endeavors. ASHP is not responsible for, and does not officially endorse this resource, and further expressly disdains any and all liability for damages of any kind arising out of the use, reference to, or reliance upon any information contained in the resource. No guarantee is provided that the content is correct, accurate, complete, up-to-date, or owned by the individual who posted it.

Updated April 2023