



Pharmacy Forecast Workshop Cases 2021

Topics: Pharmacy Workforce, Access to Care, Virtual Health, Preventative Medicine

Pharmacy Workforce: New Frontiers for Pharmacists

Literature published suggests that the supply of pharmacists may exceed demand based on current pharmacy practices as the numbers of pharmacy students graduating each year increases. In contrast, publication data also suggests that the demand of primary care exceeds the supply of primary care providers. To add to the scenario, healthcare payers have shifted the focus of reimbursement models from volume to value. Healthcare organizations are responding to payment reforms by redirecting their resources and capabilities towards population health management to improve access to quality care, while controlling cost. These factors create new opportunities for the pharmacy workforce.

General case questions:

1. What are your opinions about the factors influencing the pharmacy workforce and how should students best prepare?
 - Where do you feel there are opportunities for pharmacists to expand and enhance their roles? What about pharmacy technicians? (Reference the ASHP pharmacy workforce survey for more insight!
 - What do you see as the pharmacist's role in addressing the scarcity of primary care services in underserved areas to achieve improved patient outcomes?
2. What do you foresee are critical steps for new pharmacists to ensure they are competent and capable practitioners as they seek employment in new patient care opportunities?
3. What is your understanding of pharmacist provider status? Prescribing authority? Define these terms and talk through important advocacy and legislation milestones for these initiatives in your state.
4. There remains to be a shortage of students receiving residency training. As a pharmacy leader, how should we evaluate pharmacists' credentials as we hire them to practice in these advanced roles?
 - How can pharmacy schools better prepare students to obtain a residency position?



Access to Care

While access to healthcare has always been an issue, it has received greater visibility and urgency as our nation struggles with multiple issues impacting patient care such as the COVID-19 pandemic and racial inequity. Significant disruptions to patient care can happen at any time, and we must be prepared to tackle the uncertainty. Pharmacists can play a key role in greater access for patients to receive care both in the hospital and community settings.

General case questions:

1. Pharmacy services and healthcare in general are increasingly becoming more technology-reliant (e.g., patient electronic medical records) – what opportunities do you see for technology integration within health systems or across different pharmacy services?
 - How can pharmacists use patient data to better impact patient care?
 - What unintended consequences do you anticipate will be created by design and utilization related to electronic health records across multiple settings?
2. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increased demand for certain medications. If you were a pharmacy leader in a health system, how would you help mitigate drug shortages for vital medications to meet demand?
 - What barriers do you anticipate facing?
3. What is your understanding of a health-system formulary and how it impacts care provided to patients? What is your understanding of a payer formulary for outpatient treatment and how it impacts care provided to patients? Do these typically align?
4. As a future pharmacy leader, how would you provide further opportunity for extension of pharmacy services to populations in need?
 - How will you operationalize your plan to allow pharmacists to impact these populations and close the gap in healthcare disparities?

Virtual Health Care Services

Virtual health care services are becoming increasingly common. Telemedicine is the use of remote health care services using telecommunication tools such as smart phones, telephones, and mobile wireless devices. Recently there has been considerable growth in telemedicine during the COVID-19 pandemic, with patient consultations being conducted remotely. Healthcare payers, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, are expanding coverage (e.g., increasing reimbursement and waiving cost-sharing) for telehealth visits. As telehealth continues to expand, services such as transitions of care and medication therapy monitoring will likely continue to grow due to its convenience, efficiency, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness.

General case questions:

1. Rural communities face multiple challenges that result in disparities compared to urban settings. Discuss the barriers to quality health care in rural settings.
2. What are some perceived advantages and disadvantages of telepharmacy services? How can telepharmacy be used to elevate the role of pharmacists and technicians?
3. As a future pharmacist, how do you envision yourself to be more engaged in virtual health care services?
 - How would you implement virtual health care in different pharmacy settings (retail pharmacy vs. ambulatory clinic vs. hospital)?
 - How do you envision working with mobile applications?
4. Virtual health care systems have the potential for leveraging additional efficiencies of patient care by partnering with other types of health care services. What types of services would you want your pharmacy/department to collaborate with to ensure well-rounded patient care experiences?
 - What tools do you envision needing to make your telepharmacy service a success (information, resources, etc.)?



Preventative Medicine and Population Health

Preventive medicine is an interdisciplinary branch of medicine that focuses on protecting, promoting, and maintaining the health and well-being of patients. It can be utilized to improve outcomes in disease, disability, and death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists the five leading causes of death in the U.S. as heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease, stroke, and unintentional injuries. Population health is defined as the study of health status of a group of individuals and includes preventative medicine interventions. It is increasingly becoming an area of focus as health care providers continue to try and understand the determinants and outcomes of chronic disease. Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to help champion preventative medicine and population health efforts to help provide better patient outcomes in all care settings.

General Case Questions:

1. Chronic disease state volumes are trending upwards in the United States every year. With the emphasis on chronic disease state management by payers, how can pharmacists position themselves to help support chronic disease state management?
 - What are a few preventative medicine measures that you have seen in different healthcare settings?
2. With the expansion of ambulatory care pharmacy roles, workforce adjustments will be the required to continue success in these areas. If you were the pharmacy leader overseeing an ambulatory clinic space, how would you justify positions or expansion of pharmacy clinic staff roles to meet the demands of your clinic?
 - What credentials, privileges, or competencies would you want your pharmacists to have to provide advanced care?
3. How can health systems and/or community sites utilize data and analytics to determine population health needs in their communities?