

Expanding the Role of Pharmacists to Meet Evolving Healthcare Needs



The health care system is undergoing a significant transformation in both the finance and delivery of health care services. States, including Iowa, are examining their health care systems to define policies that create efficient models of care focused on improved quality and health outcomes as well as reduced costs. Pharmacists represent the third largest health care profession and are equipped to address key challenges facing the health care system through integration and expansion of their roles.

The Iowa Pharmacy Association is seeking legislation that will further this integration and expansion for pharmacists in Iowa's healthcare system. Implementing pharmacist statewide protocols, expanding Iowa's pharmacist immunization law, and expanding the role of the pharmacy technicians through technician product verification will allow pharmacists to help address changing healthcare needs by expanding affordable access to much needed services.

Statewide Protocols

The term statewide protocol refers to a framework that specifies the conditions under which pharmacists are authorized to provide a clinical service and order a specified medication or category of medication related to that service. Because statewide protocols facilitate pharmacists' ability to perform patient care services, within defined parameters, they can be used by states to address significant public health needs.

Expanding Pharmacist Immunization

As trusted and highly accessible health care professionals, pharmacists are well positioned to increase the public's access to immunizations. Every state, along with the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories, allows pharmacist to administer immunizations. However, requirements to do so vary state by state. In Iowa, pharmacists must enter into a local protocol to order and administer adult immunizations, and influenza for ages six and up. Allowing pharmacists to screen for and order immunizations for adults and adolescents can increase access and convenience, potentially increasing immunizations rates.

Technician Product Verification

Expanding the role of certified pharmacy technicians will allow pharmacists the time needed to perform other clinical services, such immunizations. Technician product verification (TPV), which has been allowed in Iowa hospitals and clinics (known as tech-check-tech) since 2008, allows certified pharmacy technicians in community pharmacies to ensure that the product on the label is the same as the product in the bottle, also known as final product verification.

¹The Expanding Role of Pharmacists in a Transformed Health Care System. National Governor's Association. <https://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2015/1501TheExpandingRoleOfPharmacists.pdf>

²See id.

³American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, <http://www.aacp.org/ABOUT/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴Pharmacist Statewide Protocols: Key Elements for Legislative And Regulatory Authority. National Association of State Pharmacy Associations. <https://naspas.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Pharmacist-Statewide-Protocols-Key-Elements-for-Legislative-and-Regulatory-Authority.pdf>

⁵Pharmacist-administered immunizations: What does your state allow? NASPA. <http://www.pharmacist.com/pharmacist-administered-immunizations-what-does-your-state-allow>



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