

Increasing Healthcare Access Through Pharmacist Statewide Protocols

Implementation of statewide protocols will help in addressing four important public health needs: the opioid crisis, immunizations, smoking cessation, and appropriate antibiotic use. 91% of Americans live within five miles of a community pharmacy. Pharmacists are an available and accessible healthcare professional and are ready to help address these important health needs.

Overview

- 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.
- Statewide protocols address public health needs and are typically enacted related to preventing disease. Common statewide protocols include immunizations, medications for smoking cessation, and travel medications, and naloxone for drug overdose emergencies.
- Currently, these services may be provided by pharmacists in Iowa under collaborative practice agreements, which allow pharmacists and physicians to enter into an agreement that authorizes the pharmacist to modify or discontinue drug therapy for patients defined in the agreement.
- In comparison with collaborative practice agreements, statewide protocols create a uniform framework for any licensed pharmacists in the state who meet the qualifications specified in the protocol to implement it into practice, allowing for consistent and broader access across the state and an increased ability to address important public health needs.

Other State Approaches

- 35 states have implemented at least one statewide protocol.¹
- In 2017, 18 states introduced 32 bills relating to statewide protocols. Of these bills, 18 passed in twelve different states.²
- The growing number of states implementing statewide protocols demonstrates the recognized value in utilizing the expertise and accessibility of pharmacists to increase access to medications important for public health.

Proposed Law

- While some Iowa pharmacists may perform these services under collaborative practice agreements and statewide standing orders, statewide protocols ensure the services provided are predictable and consistent across the state.
- The proposed law would add a new section to Iowa Code 155A which allows the Iowa Board of Pharmacy, in consultation with Iowa Department of Public Health, to develop and implement statewide protocols for tobacco cessation services, naloxone, and point of care testing and treatment for influenza and group A strep throat.
- Implementing statewide protocols in Iowa can allow physicians to focus on higher acuity patients, while providing a framework for pharmacists to care for patients seeking routine and preventative care that would otherwise require an appointment and additional costs.

¹ Statewide Protocols and Pharmacist Prescribing. Krystalyn Weaver, PharmD. 2017. <https://naspa.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/SWP-Session.pdf>

² Id.



8515 Douglas Ave., Ste. 16
Des Moines, Iowa 50322

ph: 515-270-0713
e: ipa@iarx.org
w: www.iarx.org