

## How & Why Pharmacy Buyers Should Become Members of a Hospital's P&T Committee

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### Debra: Health System Inventory Specialist

- Oversee all pharmaceutical purchasing for St Charles Health System (4 inpatient hospitals, Oncology/Infusion Clinics, Community Pharmacy)
- Maintain central distribution of all inpatient use medications
- Drug shortage management
- Manage contract compliance and solicit potential new contract opportunities

### Erin: Associate Director, Clinical Services Co-Chair of Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee

- Oversee a team of 20+ clinical pharmacist specialists and their services at Rush University Medical Center
- Lead clinical initiatives within the Pharmacy Department and in multi-disciplinary teams
- Manage drug shortages, track formulary compliance, and coordinate formulary decisions
- Track and report on quality and safety of medication use processes
- Begin to integrate clinical practices across the parent hospital and affiliated community hospitals

### Learning Objectives

- Define the role of a hospital Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) committee
- Explain how pharmacy buyers can be involved in P&T committees
- List examples of buyer-led cost savings or quality initiatives
- Identify items to include in a proposal for a buyer to join a P&T committee

## The Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee

### What Is The Role Of A Health System Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee?

- To oversee the safe and accurate use of pharmaceutical therapies within the entity
- Provide guidance on healthcare best practices
- Maintain and review changes to the hospital formulary with regard to safety, efficacy, and cost containment
- Maintain a connection between medical staff and pharmacy services
- Drugs are reviewed through monographs, reassessments of previous decisions, and class reviews
- P&T and its subcommittees will establish use criteria, provider restrictions, clinical guidelines, interchange rules, and quality or safety monitoring plans

American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Am J Health-Syst Pharm. 2008; 65:1272-83.

## P&T Has Changed Over Time

- P&T committees must consider the needs of larger systems as well as individual hospitals
- Outpatient services may be a subcommittee or primary charge of P&T
- New technology and targeted therapies reinforce the need for selection criteria and cost-containment strategies
- Shift to value-based care prioritizes outcomes over costs
- Decisions must incorporate contracting, reimbursement, impact on quality, and patient access

Vogenberg FR, Gomes J. P&T 2014; 39:760-61, 768-72.

## P&T Committee Membership

- Physician chair/co-chair
- Pharmacist co-chair/secretary/lead
- Physician representatives from different practice settings and service lines
  - Hospitalists
  - Residents
  - Surgery
  - Inpatient and outpatient specialties
  - Primary care
- Clinical pharmacists, residents, students
- Nursing leadership
- Hospital quality/safety
- Dieticians
- Other hospital leadership
- Pharmacy buyers?

## Audience Survey

- How many buyers currently serve on P&T?

## Why Should The Pharmacy Buyer Be Involved In P&T?

- Pharmacy buyers can be an integral member of a P&T Committee because they have first-hand knowledge of market availability and supply trends.
- Pharmacy buyers can be excellent advisors when making drug shortage mitigation plans
- Given the right training, Pharmacy buyers can provide thoughtful analysis of EHR data and cost savings strategies

## Examples Of Buyer-led Cost Savings & Quality Initiatives

- Elimination of items from formulary → inventory holding reduction
- Formulary optimization efforts to reduce unnecessary waste and increase turns
- 6 and 12 month review of all new formulary additions
- All neb conversion to eliminate waste of partial-use inhalers and maximize contracts
- Reduction of IV acetaminophen use in patients tolerating oral medications
- Elimination of Mephyton tablets in favor of oral vitamin K solution

## Why Isn't There A Buyer On Every P&T Committee Already?

### Common Barriers

- Culture/territorialism
- Time commitments
- Lack of awareness of buyer interest
- Lack of awareness of buyer impact
- Others?

### “Pair & Share”

- Partner with one or two people sitting near you
- Come up with at least one idea to address each barrier:
  - Department/hospital/health-system culture
  - Time commitments
  - Lack of awareness of buyer interest
  - Lack of awareness of buyer impact

### Build Relationships

- Make sure your pharmacist P&T lead has a clear understanding of your work and your role in the department, and vice versa
- Get to know purchasers in other parts of the hospital and health system (e.g. supply chain)
- Increase exposure and name recognition: ask to be invited to other meetings with physicians, finance, and hospital leadership
- Establish yourself as a point of contact for questions on drug shortages, discontinuations, and new products
- Take ownership of maintaining vendor relationships & contracts

### Make Time

- You are probably already doing the work!
- Don't wait until the week before the meeting to get organized
- Coordinate expectations with your pharmacist lead so you can be continuously preparing
- Put P&T meeting and prep time on your calendar
- Hold yourself accountable

### Be Clear About Your Interest In Joining P&T

- Have a conversation with your Pharmacy Director about your potential value as a member of P&T
- Demonstrate your understanding of the importance of a well-supported P&T Committee
- Ask questions to understand the problems you can solve
  - “How are you getting the prices you use in your monographs?”
  - “What pricing do you use when checking the value of an initiative?”
  - “What are the reactions when you describe drug shortages?”
  - “Can our health system benefit from combined purchasing power?”
- Discuss potential initiatives that you could bring to P&T to help optimize your institution's formulary

### Estimate Your Impact

- Find potential initiatives that could be of value to your health system
  - Published references such as ASHP can be a great source of information
  - Look for items on your formulary that seem to regularly outdate – Are there other items that can be used to create an interchange?
- Start to quantify the value of potential projects
  - Reduction of total doses, patient days in hospital, and overall spend can be great metrics when tracking cost savings.
  - Working with colleagues in your informatics department can be resource when trying to gather necessary information from your EHR

## Putting It Together

### Learn More About Your Site

- Get to know the P&T leaders
- Understand member roles, including voters
- If part of a system, understand the relationship between individual site and system P&T decisions
- Use your knowledge and tools to identify new P&T initiatives

### Take Action

- Attend P&T as a guest
- Informally request addition to the committee
- Send a message to your manager or the P&T lead to express interest
- Participate in P&T prep and follow-up meetings
- Track the value of your impact

## References & Resources

1. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP guidelines on the pharmacy and therapeutics committee and the formulary system. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm.* 2008; 65:1272–83.
2. Vogenberg FR, Gomes J. The changing roles of P&T committees. *P.T.* 2014; 39:760-61, 768-72.
3. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP guidelines on medication cost management strategies for hospitals and health systems. *Am J Health-Syst Pharm.* 2008; 65:1368–84.