

Reimbursement for Pharmacist Services Elevator Speech

Suggested Talking Points

Introduce yourself: Hi, my name is (insert name) and I am currently a (insert position) at (insert workplace or school) in (insert city, state).

Over the years, pharmacist roles have evolved beyond the traditional activity of medication dispensing to advance healthcare and optimize patient outcomes. Pharmacists 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impacts on disease outcomes, quality of care, access to care, and patient safety.¹ However, current legislation, outdated policy, and limited reimbursement may restrict the positive impact that pharmacists can have on patient care.

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

1. Examples of services with limited or no reimbursement: 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. Each of these essential functions improve patient care and contribute to the healthcare team.
2. Pharmacists are medication experts specialized in optimizing therapeutic care plans to ensure patients are taking the right medications at the right doses, and in the right ways, maximizing the effectiveness of medications to better manage chronic conditions and prevent untoward effects, including hospitalization or death.

2. How does this impact patients?

1. Many of the expanded services offered by pharmacists increase access to healthcare, especially for those with limited opportunities to schedule an appointment with other practitioners. For example, in 29 states and Washington, D.C., pharmacists are authorized to prescribe hormonal contraceptives via collaborative protocols. In other states, pharmacists can prescribe pre-exposure prevention antiviral therapy for HIV and COVID-19 to increase access to these crucial medications and reduce the risk of transmission. Despite the benefits of pharmacist-provided care, these services are underutilized given a lack of prescriber authority and reimbursement.²
2. Lastly, lack of reimbursement for medication dispensing, cognitive services, and expanded patient care activities has led to pharmacy closures, which disproportionately impacts rural communities where local pharmacists may be the most accessible clinicians.³

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

1. Recognition of pharmacists as healthcare providers through national policy would be a significant step to allow reimbursement of patient care services.
2. There are several states that compensate pharmacists for healthcare services similar to other non-physician practitioners. Additionally, contracts between individual pharmacies and health insurance groups are becoming somewhat more common to recognize the impact pharmacists have on patients and reimburse them for care provided. However, these strategies are limited and not all patients may have access to these beneficial services.

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

Remember:

- Stick to plain language that doesn't require healthcare or pharmacy background.
- Keep it short (60-90 seconds).
- Answer any questions and provide feedback/additional info as needed.
- Always follow up with a thank you.

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. <https://nasp.us/blog/resource/pharmacist-prescribing-hiv-prep-and-pep/>
3. 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>

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