

Office-Based Medication Management

Holland Code: SCI

Background

Office-based medication management involves the role of those pharmacists who are actively providing medication management in a variety of ways including medication therapy management (MTM) programs. Some pharmacists specialize in a given disease state and are affiliated with a medical practice while others work out of their own office.

These practitioners also are positioned to be involved with accountable care organizations (ACOs) and patient-centered medical homes (PCMHs). Of interest is the complexity that may exist for billing of services provided. Many of the pharmacy associations are working together for pharmacists to become recognized as providers; provider status will help as practitioners will be able to have the appropriate coding and billing requirements.

Characteristics

Twenty-five office-based medication management pharmacists responded to the 2012 *APhA*

Career Pathway Evaluation Program survey. Eighty-eight percent of respondents held an entry level pharmacy degree; 81% held the PharmD degree, and 13% percent indicated that they also had a non-pharmacy bachelor's degree. Forty-two percent had been through a residency program, 42% had been through a certificate training program, and 6% reported having been through some form of other training. Respondents' average age was 44 years old. Eighty-one percent of respondents were female. Income data show 7% earn between \$80,000–\$100,000, while 64% earn \$100,000 or more per year, with 7% earning greater than \$150,000. The average time worked per week was 42 hours.

An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their job, with 54% indicating “extremely satisfied” and 38% indicating “somewhat satisfied.” Similarly, most respondents indicated that they felt the job was challenging, with 42% indicating “extremely challenging” and 54% indicating “somewhat challenging.”

Insider's Perspective

What aspects of the job are most appealing?

Two specific areas of these roles were listed as the most appealing aspects by the respondents. Twenty-four percent cited direct patient care and the flexibility they have in scheduling. Working with other health care professionals and autonomy were listed by

12% of the respondents as appealing aspects. Respondents also indicated that they spend 35% of their time on patient care services focused on the medication aspects of care. One respondent stated that “working with patients to review their current medications for optimal pharmaceutical care while reducing medication duplication, errors, and cost” is a very appealing aspect of the role. Another added that “working one on one with patients and physicians” is appealing.

What aspects of the job are least appealing?

Income was cited by 12% of pharmacists as the least appealing aspect of their jobs. Even with the lower income, these pharmacists are satisfied with the work they perform. Some also mentioned they do not enjoy having to repeatedly explain the value of what they do.

What advice should students and practitioners consider when selecting the option of becoming an office-based medication management pharmacist?

Twelve percent of pharmacists cited three distinct areas to consider for a role in office-based medication management: the importance of keeping up on reading the literature, being able to work independently, and staying motivated in an office-based environment. This is especially true as most students do not get exposed to this practice environment during their academic training. One respondent summed up what many indicated, stating the need to do “many hours of reading to stay current on most up-to-date guidelines to ensure evidence-based medication therapy management.” Another stated the need to have a “high level of resolve to diplomatically yet firmly act as patient advocate in applying the patient’s wishes and best clinical practices often in the face of opposition from prescribers and sometimes family members.”

Adapted from the American Pharmacists Association