POLICY STATEMENT

Statement on Pharmaceutical Care

Preamble

The purpose of this statement is to assist consultant pharmacists in understanding pharmaceutical care. Such understanding must precede efforts to implement pharmaceutical care, which merits the highest priority in all practice settings. ASCP is committed to taking the actions necessary to help move the concept of pharmaceutical care forward in practice and to help its members deliver this standard of care in a patient-focused, cooperative, interdisciplinary environment.

Position

ASCP believes that pharmaceutical care is the necessary philosophy and mission of pharmacy practice. It is a basic patient need that provides focus and direction for pharmacy practice.

Pharmaceutical Care

Pharmaceutical care is the responsible provision of drug therapy for the purpose of achieving definite outcomes that improve a patient’s quality of life. These outcomes are: cure of a disease, elimination or reduction of a patient’s symptomatology, arresting or slowing of a disease process, or preventing a disease or symptomatology.

Pharmaceutical care involves the process through which a pharmacist, in cooperation with a patient and other health professionals, designs, implements, and monitors a pharmaceutical care plan that will produce specific therapeutic outcomes for the patient. This in turn involves three major functions performed by the pharmacist: identifying potential and actual drug-related problems, resolving actual drug-related problems, and preventing potential drug-related problems.

Pharmaceutical care is a necessary element of health care that should be integrated with other elements. Pharmaceutical care is, however, provided for the direct benefit of the patient, and the pharmacist is responsible directly to the patient for the quality of that care. The fundamental relationship in pharmaceutical care is a mutually beneficial exchange in which the patient grants authority to the provider and the provider gives competence and commitment (accepts responsibility) to the patient.

The fundamental goals, processes, and relationships of pharmaceutical care exist regardless of practice settings.
• The basis of pharmaceutical care is responsibility and accountability to patients for the outcome of their drug therapy.
• The overall goal of pharmaceutical care is to maintain patients at the highest possible level of functional and psychosocial well-being through optimal management of drug therapy.
• Pharmaceutical care requires continuity of care between different practice settings.

**Drug-Related Problems**

A drug-related problem is an event or situation involving drug therapy that actually or potentially interferes with an optimum outcome for a specific patient. Drug-related problems include:

• Untreated indications. The patient has a medical problem that requires drug therapy but is not receiving a drug for that indication.
• Improper drug selection. The patient has a drug indication but is taking the wrong drug, or is taking a drug that is not the most appropriate for the special needs of the patient.
• Subtherapeutic dosage. The patient has a medical problem that is being treated with too little of the correct medication.
• Failure to receive medication. The patient has a medical problem that is the result of not receiving a medication due to economic, psychological, sociological, or pharmaceutical reasons.
• Overdosage. The patient has a medical problem that is being treated with too much of the correct medication.
• Adverse drug reactions. The patient has a medical problem that is the result of an adverse drug reaction or adverse effect.
• Drug interactions. The patient has a medical problem that is the result of a drug-drug, drug-food, or drug-laboratory test interaction.
• Drug use without indication. The patient is taking a medication for no medically valid indication.
• Treatment failures. The patient has a medical problem that is being treated with a medication that is generally considered appropriate for the indication, but the desired therapeutic outcome is not achieved.

**Pharmaceutical Care Plan**

The pharmacist designs, implements, and monitors a pharmaceutical care plan for each patient. Within each pharmaceutical care plan, the pharmacist identifies desired therapeutic and/or functional outcomes for each medication prescribed and potential and/or actual drug-related problems. The patient then is assessed by the pharmacist at appropriate intervals for progress toward the therapeutic and/or functional goals and for occurrence and resolution of drug-related problems. The pharmacist continuously updates the pharmaceutical care plan with patient-specific information and recommends modifications in therapy. The pharmaceutical care plan is separate from, but developed in conjunction with, the patient’s overall plan of care, when one exists.

*Approved by the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists Board of Directors, July 1996; last reviewed October 2017. Developed by the Educational Affairs Council.*
References