



Diane Martin, R.Ph.
Greater Lawrence Family Health Center

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5 Tips for Building Strong Pharmacist-Physician Partnerships

As the health care industry looks to improve patient care and reduce spending, pharmacists are stepping into a larger role on the care team. Nearly all 50 states now allow for collaborative practice agreements or relationships between pharmacists and physicians, enabling pharmacists to provide a broad range of clinical services.

While the positive impact of including a pharmacist in a patient's care team is widely accepted and fairly well documented, it can be challenging to forge those relationships. At Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, we have been focused on expanding our clinical pharmacy programs for several years. Based on our experience, our clinical pharmacists have a few tips for building solid working relationships with prescribing physicians.



Turn to Technology

Our pharmacy relies on Parata Max[®] high-speed automated dispenser to free pharmacists' time for working directly with patients and physicians, while keeping our operating costs low. We also incorporate web and mobile technology to extend our reach beyond the pharmacy, giving patients greater access to the care and advice they need. We needed sustainable, cost-effective ways to provide high-quality, hands-on patient care. Technology has given us that stability and flexibility.



Determine the Source of your Business

As part of a large community health center, we enjoy fairly easy access to our patients and their prescribing physicians. Pharmacists in a retail setting can determine where the majority of their business comes from by running a detailed report to identify prescribing physicians who consistently use their pharmacy. Determine who they are, where they practice, and what type of patient they typically prescribe for. This information will be helpful when reaching out to form partnerships.



Build Relationships Based on Collaboration

Pharmacists can lend their experience and expertise as medication management experts to help improve patient adherence, and studies show most physicians feel that pharmacists' expertise improves overall patient care and outcomes. Still, sometimes pharmacists encounter resistance when working with physicians. You can build working relationships based on trust and collaboration by providing suggestions rather than corrections and enhancing a physician's care plan rather than replacing it.



Share Information with the Team

In the spirit of collaboration, we developed wellness report cards for patients managing specific disease states, such as diabetes. To develop these report cards, we pulled from national organizations like the American Diabetes Association to include questions about blood glucose, podiatry exams, medication adherence, diet and nutrition and more. We use them as a tool for coaching patients and to share health information with other members of the care team. These reports provide the entire team with the information needed to make a positive impact on each patient's outcome.



Don't Get Discouraged

We're working to change the perception of pharmacy. It has taken us years to get to where we are today, and will take more time to get to where we'd like to be. Continue to find ways to elevate your role on the patient care team by getting out from behind the counter, connecting with patients and partnering with physicians and other providers.

About Diane

Diane Martin, R.Ph., is the associate vice president of pharmacy operations at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Under her leadership, the center's pharmacy unit has grown from a single site to five sites with more than 30 pharmacists, 25 technicians and a growing clinical pharmacy services team. Diane uses technology to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and support pharmacists' role as key players on the health care team.

Learn More about Parata Max

Pharmacists across the country are using Parata technology to help improve patient adherence and outcomes and reduce health care costs. Want to know if Parata Max automated dispensing solution is right for your pharmacy?

Contact us today at success@parata.com.

