

Beyond the Dispensing Role

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Besides fulfilling the basic dispensing role, the pharmacy profession has evolved to provide clinical services to other healthcare providers in order to improve the quality of patient care as well as to manage health care costs. The integration of some of these various services can evidently be observed in different practice settings from small private community hospitals to large teaching medical centers. At Fountain Valley Regional Hospital, a Tenet investor-owned community hospital, such pharmacy roles have expanded to involve management of a specific drug therapy or achievement of a specific therapeutic outcome for individual patients referred by the physicians. Examples of direct consultative services provided by pharmacists include therapeutic drug monitoring for aminoglycoside and vancomycin, antimicrobial dosing, anticoagulant therapy, and total parenteral nutrition. In other instances, some services (e.g. anemia management with epoetin, therapeutic interchange, and renal dosage adjustment) are automatically rendered without referral by the physician. In the following, several of our services following established criteria approved by our facility's Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee will be discussed.