

FUNCTIONS OF THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE PHARMACY

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What is IHS?

Indian Health Service (IHS) is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human services that provide medical and public health services to federally recognized Native American tribes and Alaskan Natives. There are 2 located in North Dakota (Turtle Mountain and Standing Rock).

Functions of the Pharmacy

The functions of our pharmacy is provide quality care and safety to patients.

At our unit pharmacists and technicians are able to provide quality clinical care to our patients due to our many clinics within the pharmacy.

Some of these expanded pharmacist functions include:

- Anticoagulation management
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Healthy Heart
- COPD
- MOUD (medications for opioid use disorder)
- Medication management
- Asthma
- Hepatitis C

Roles of Technicians

Technicians play a critical role in supporting pharmacist to deliver patient care.

Technicians perform many duties including

- Tech check tech
- Renewing and verifying OTC orders
- Immunizations
- Point of sale operations, initiation of prior authorizations
- Pharmacy operations & Inventory Management
- Sending refill requests, patient screening prior to consultation, as well as MTMs

Tech check tech (TCT)

- We are able to fill, verify and dispense medications to patients without the direct involvement of a pharmacist.
- Makes the process quicker for patients
- Increases technician job satisfaction and pride in work
- Pharmacists still must perform counseling when required
- Provides opportunity for pharmacists to expand their clinical function

OTC

Our facility has also implemented the use of an OTC ordering/renewal program in which we are able to extend prescriptions for OTC medications as well as diabetic supplies. With this process technicians are able to screen patients for proper OTC selection and dosing.

- alleviates provider burden
- decreases patient traffic
- Patients are able to contact the pharmacy for medication renewals rather than their pcp.
- Helps patients financially

Immunizations

Technicians

- acquire/stock all immunizations within our facility.
- provide vaccines for children (VFC) but also all immunizations that are to be expected in adult administration. Shingrix, pneumonia, as well as RSV.
- Ihs uses the E3 vaccination strategy. E3 stands for “every patient, every encounter, every recommended vaccine offered (when appropriate)”

Point of sale

- Patients receive medications regardless of insurance or rejections
- Running reports weekly, monthly and quarterly for rejections
- Benefit coordinators help with insurance issues.
- Work with real time rejections as well as post-fill rejections
- Initiate prior authorizations as well as alternative therapy suggestions for pharmacist/provider review

Conclusion

in conclusion, we can assure to our patients as well as our peers that the extended roles and opportunities offered to IHS technicians are crucial when it comes to patient care and productivity.

The expanded duties have assisted pharmacists across the board within our department and has increased patient accessibility as well as access to care.

Over the years we have streamlined our workflow and will continue to build upon a successful relationship among technicians, pharmacists and all other healthcare workers. Our technicians have played a pivotal role in increasing pharmacy efficiencies and clinical services. We are excited and hopeful to any other technicians who are seeking to expand their role within the pharmacy community.

Questions?