

PHARMACY SPOTLIGHT

Nevada Society of Health-System Pharmacists

Medication Reconciliation—A Unique Role for Technicians

Medication reconciliation refers to the review of medications when patients are transitioning in care. A key component to the process is gathering a detailed and correct medication history, including current medications upon admission to the hospital. Many hospitals are moving towards having the pharmacy department manage the process of obtaining the medication history for patients being admitted to the hospital, and a common approach is to utilize pharmacy technicians or students to collect the patient information, with pharmacist final sign-off.

NVSHIP interviewed Jessie Roberts, a pharmacy student at Creighton University and works as a pharmacy technician with Renown Health. At Renown Health, they have a medication reconciliation program where she gathers accurate information regarding patient's medications prior to hospitalization.

What drew you to this position?

I was already working at Renown Health. The opportunity came up while I was doing prerequisite courses for pharmacy school. It was something that was outside of comfort zone, but I wanted to push myself to learn a new skill set, one that I would continue to apply when I became a pharmacist.

What is the most rewarding aspect of the position?

It's great to see a direct impact on the patients and to spend one-on-one time with them. The patients are appreciative that we spend the time to ensure their safety by getting an accurate history.



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What is uniquely challenging about this position?

Working one-on-one with patients is a unique experience for a hospital pharmacy technician, as the technician is usually in positions that are somewhat “behind the scenes”. In some cases, this can be challenging. Patients may ask for more from you than you can provide. You have to learn approaches to talk through situations, elaborating on your role and what you can do. You may need to coordinate with pharmacists or nurses to inform them of things you discover while interviewing the patient.

What is your process for handling difficult patients?

I have dealt with frustrated patients and even patients that have refused our service, although this is really just a small handful of experiences. It’s important to stay calm and non-threatening. I emphasize the benefit of our service and that it is for their safety. You will learn some techniques to de-escalate frustrated patients. You may need to work with nurse to help the patient become more cooperative. Just remember, your goal is to win them over and you will be successful.

How about patients that are overly chatty?

This is a hard one, patients can be lonely and just need more interaction. Try to listen as much as possible. Set a reasonable timeframe, and use it when you need to. Reorient them after your timeframe is up that you need to update the team. You will need to develop a way to redirect in a polite way.

NVSHP would like to thank Jessie Roberts, a Doctorate of Pharmacy student at Creighton University (Class of 2022) and pharmacy technician at Renown Health for providing the interview. Interview conducted and written by Stephen Chromi, PharmD, BCPS, BCCCP, NVSHP Director-At-Large Public Relations.