

Development and Assessment of Competency

Lynn Eschenbacher and Rhonda Zillmer

KEY TERMS

Audience Response—Incorporating audience members into the presentation by asking questions and getting responses via raised hands, text messages, or official technology system.

Balanced Scorecard (BSC)—A strategic planning and management document to align all of the activities within your department to the vision and strategy of the senior leaders and the organization's board of directors.

Educational Needs Assessment—A question-and-answer process (paper or electronic-based) that determines the current level of knowledge on a topic.

Flipped Classroom—A method where students learn content on their own prior to class (e.g., recorded lecture and completed activities) and then apply that information during student-centered learning activities in class.

Introduction

Ensuring that your staff is prepared and competent is essential for a clinical coordinator. If you want to implement a new service, continue to advance practice, or adhere to your strategic plan, the pharmacists and technicians must be prepared, knowledgeable of the process and essential elements, and able to apply their knowledge in the clinical and operational setting to achieve the intended outcomes. Competency is more than just signing off on a new process or completing a checklist. If your organization currently has an annual process of a packet of papers for the pharmacists to sign, then perhaps you do not have a robust competency process to support your endeavors to provide positive patient outcomes. Becoming competent in any area is a journey; training and education are the cornerstones of competency. We describe in this chapter how to identify the competencies required, develop a competency education plan, assess your employees' competency, and, finally, implement an ongoing process.

Starting Your Competency Plan: Alignment and Value

The first part of developing your organization's competency plan is to know what you want to focus on for the current and coming years. This is where strategic planning is important. You need to know what pharmacy services are value-added to the organization. Use the value equation that **Value is equal to Quality plus Service divided by Cost** to determine in each of these categories how pharmacy can increase quality or decrease cost.

$$\text{Value} = \frac{\text{Quality} + \text{Service}}{\text{Cost}}$$

Although cost is the denominator in the equation and could easily be all you focus on to reduce costs, it is important to understand and communicate how increases in quality and service also increase value. A focus on increasing quality and/or service is how clinical pharmacy services bring value to the patient experience. It is always important to monitor and be aware of cost and incorporate ways to eliminate waste and cost in your processes.

To determine what your organization considers patient quality and value, seek out senior leadership's **balanced scorecard** (BSC) or other dashboard of priorities set for the organization. A BSC is a strategic planning and management document to align your department's activities to the vision and strategy of the organization's senior leaders and the board of directors. Having all of the information in one document or tool helps to ensure that the priorities are clearly stated for the organization and serves as a monitor of organizational performance against the strategic goals (see **Figure 9-1**). How does pharmacy fit into these goals or advance these goals? How can you use them to identify which services you want to start or expand? (For more details on how to conduct a strategic plan, see Chapter 10: Strategic Planning and Project Management). It is important to start with the desired outcome—what you want your staff members to know—and then work backward, developing the competencies, how you will teach it, and how you will know that they fully understand and can apply the information. This process is called *reverse engineering*.

Identification of Baseline Knowledge and Annual Education Plan Development

Once you know your strategic direction and the value-added services for your organization, you should determine your staff's baseline knowledge specific to that initiative. In addition, there are foundational competencies including knowledge of sterile compounding; control substance rules and regulations; special patient population areas such as neonatal, pediatrics, geriatrics, and oncology/chemotherapy; and other high-risk medications or processes. These might not be new clinical services or value-added programs, but they are core to your organization, and competency must be performed on a regular basis or annually.

Is your staff ready? Do they have the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful and lead the way to positive patient outcomes? Which initiatives are you going to implement this year? Which initiatives will be implemented over the next few years that you need to develop the foundational knowledge with your staff now so that you can continue to