

CHAPTER
5

Creating the Ambulatory Patient Care Model

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on getting approval to start a new clinical pharmacy service! There are numerous next steps, and with thoughtful planning you will be on your way to seeing your first patient in a few months. We have attempted to categorize the many next steps into five tracks:

1. Clinic operations
2. Credentialing and privileging
3. Policy and procedures
4. Legal
5. Billing

The first three tracks are discussed in this chapter, and the latter two are discussed in Chapter 7. The goal is to pursue all five tracks simultaneously to optimize efficiency and effectiveness.

Clinic operation considerations include everything from getting your patient visit rooms and office space set up to developing the process for how patients flow through your clinic.^{1,2} The key when traveling down this track is to use your organization's resources and

Chapter Objectives

- List at least four clinic operation considerations that should be pursued when creating a new pharmacist service.
- Identify components of a credentialing and privileging process.
- Discuss the various clinic policy and procedure documents that are required.

procedures that already exist. In a physician's office, as in our Dr. Busybee sample case, model your service operations that mimic the processes of your health team colleagues. To maintain your service efficiency, it is important to use existing clinic support staff in the same manner and in the same roles as other providers use them. If this is done from the beginning as an expectation, the road ahead will be much smoother. Clinic operation considerations in a community pharmacy setting vary significantly and depend primarily on space and ancillary staff options available.



The point remains the same: Try to use already established processes and current staff roles as much as possible.

When creating or expanding your pharmacy service, you will need to see if credentialing and/or privileging will be required by your healthcare system or pharmacy organization, state laws, and/or payers (as discussed in Chapter 2). This process can take time to complete, so you should investigate requirements early on so as not to delay your ability to practice and/or bill for services. It is also worth noting that this area is changing rapidly for pharmacists, so if this is not a requirement for pharmacists where you work now, it could be soon.

Policy and procedure considerations involve developing required and recommended processes and paperwork. Often, developing policy and procedures is the easiest and least time consuming of the five tracks to complete. You may find policy and procedures to be the most tedious of activities; however, in the end you will be thankful that you spent the time developing them. Policy and procedures maintain a standard of quality, help in training new personnel, and keep everyone on the same page regarding processes and services, which is especially important as you grow. Usually, policy and procedures can be addressed near the end of your program development, such as for a small private physician-based clinic. However, this may not be the best strategy in a large organization such as a community chain pharmacy-based clinic or a hospital-based clinic. In these latter practice settings, the process for getting policy and procedure documents approved may be time-consuming. For this reason, we recommend that you at least become familiar with what is both required and recommended early on so that there are no surprises at the end that delay your grand opening.

CLINIC OPERATIONS

Clinic operations involve addressing tasks that impact the proposed clinical service on a day-to-day basis at the practice site including the following³⁻⁷:

- Office space considerations
- Clinic scheduling including pharmacist coverage
- Clinic workflow

PATIENT VISIT SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

It is imperative that the practice site where you intend to establish services has office and patient visit space for you. To protect patient privacy, finding space away from other patients and the public is imperative because waiting rooms, counters, and front windows are not considered ideal locations for patient visits to occur. In most ambulatory patient care settings, space availability is a premium commodity and depends on the patient load of other clinic providers and your revenue generation capability, so flexibility is needed. For instance, the situation may indicate that an extra exam room