

Better nursing care through improved pharmacy support with R_xe-sourcesm

Pharmacy Resources

R_xe-source

Background

Lacking the size and patient load typically needed to justify staffing a 24-hour pharmacy, both Mission Hospital in Mission, Texas, and Palms of Pasadena Hospital in St. Petersburg, Florida, relied on their nursing supervisors and on-call pharmacists to provide overnight coverage.

Mission Hospital is a 138-bed general hospital that provides a comprehensive range of services, including cardiology, diagnostic, emergency and trauma, rehabilitation and women's health.

"We're very proud of our nursing staff," says Mission Hospital's Chief Nursing Officer Pat McMillon, "yet without a round-the-clock pharmacy, we were not providing our overnight team with the same level of support as we were during the day. Though we had a pharmacist on call, our nurses were understandably reluctant to call after hours unless there was a true emergency. So order review and prompt dispensing were challenges, and so was getting the kind of additional information we needed to do our job well."

The situation was similar for Kathy Saxon, Palms of Pasadena Hospital's Director of Nursing. "Our nighttime nursing supervisor was frequently tied up, either answering drug questions or accessing the pharmacy herself to dispense medications. That extra workload interfered with our entire staff's productivity. Of course, we had our pharmacist on call, but waking someone in the middle of the night to answer a question is not something anyone wants to do." Palms of Pasadena Hospital is a 307-bed community hospital that offers a variety of specialized programs, including a joint replacement center, a bariatric program and a wound healing center, in addition to a range of inpatient and outpatient services.

The challenge

Both Mission and Palms of Pasadena hospitals were aware of the challenges associated with relying on on-call pharmacists for nighttime coverage. They recognized that the nationwide focus on medication errors and new JCAHO standards for medication management meant that

"We recognized that nighttime pharmacy support for our nursing staff was suboptimal, but we just didn't have the patient load to justify a 24-hour pharmacy service. R_xe-source is an effective alternative to adding pharmacy staff."

Kathy Saxon
Director of Nursing
Palms of Pasadena Hospital



they needed a better solution; however, they could not justify hiring the additional staff needed for a full-time pharmacy — a situation further compounded by the nationwide shortage of registered pharmacists.

"The situation at night was complicating a vital working relationship between nursing and pharmacy; the lack of a 24-hour pharmacy was the most frequent complaint we heard from our nurses," Saxon notes.

The solution

Both Mission Hospital and Palms of Pasadena turned to Cardinal Health's R_xe-source to protect patient safety and meet JCAHO requirements for medication management. R_xe-source provides medication order review, order entry and related services from a regional pharmacy service center. The center is staffed by registered pharmacists who have been thoroughly trained on each hospital's pharmacy information system. The pharmacy service center is accessed by phone, fax or secure Internet connection. In addition to order review and entry, Cardinal Health pharmacists are available to answer questions, provide additional drug information or clarify orders when the hospital's pharmacies are closed.

The results

Mission Hospital's Director of Pharmacy Imelda Ochoa was surprised by the impact R_xe-source had with nursing. "It's had much more of a positive impact than I had anticipated. Our night nurses are relieved that they don't have to worry about dispensing responsibilities and have been very grateful for the consulting support. In fact, the service has even become an advantage for us in recruiting nurses."

"We're receiving very timely order reviews, getting the information we need, when we need it, and we don't have our pharmacists or our nurses backed-up in the morning as a result of overnight medication orders," McMillon notes.

At Palms of Pasadens, Saxon says that nighttime medication order reviews are now completed in equal or less time than during the day since R_xe-source pharmacists deal with less of the day-to-day interruptions that are typical in a hospital pharmacy.

"I know our nurses and supervisors are extremely pleased with the service," Saxon says. "And our physicians are happier because they know there is less delay in getting meds to their patients during the nighttime hours."

R_xe-source can enhance the collaboration between nursing and pharmacy by keeping your hospital pharmacy working — even when the pharmacy is closed. For more information, call 877.300.9180.

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