

## NEW PERSPECTIVES

## Notes from a Patient-centered Medical Home Pharmacist

Amy Thompson, PharmD, BCACP, CDE

*Dr. Thompson is assistant professor in the South Carolina College of Pharmacy at the Medical University of South Carolina campus in Charleston, SC.*

**A**s one of three pharmacists in an internal medicine patient-centered medical home (PCMH), I have the opportunity to work with a diverse care team of nurses, medical assistants, faculty, resident physicians, advanced practice providers, medical and pharmacy students, and social workers. Our pharmacists are heavily involved in resident and faculty education and support; daily, we answer drug information questions and help physicians streamline complex medication regimens. We participate in weekly PCMH team meetings within the clinic, and we are also involved in nursing education. In fact, we have developed a medication history training and certification program for medical assistants and licensed practical nurses. As a result, every patient who visits the clinic has a reliable medication history before seeing the physician, thereby saving time and increasing medication safety.

A patient care team is a group of clinicians who work closely to-

gether and communicate regularly to provide optimal patient care. Clinical pharmacist involvement in the care team has been shown to have a positive effect on prescribing behavior and improving patient outcomes. Pharmacists can optimize medication regimens to increase efficacy and decrease the potential for adverse effects. With collaborative drug therapy agreements with physicians, pharmacists have the authority to initiate, modify, or continue drug therapy. From a patient care and safety perspective, there is an abundance of literature that demonstrates pharmacists improve quality of care and safety through team-based care in managing anticoagulation, diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and complex medication regimens. Pharmacists not only educate patients but also actively contribute to improving therapeutic management of a variety of disease states. Pharmacists complement the efforts of other team members since pharma-

cists can see patients more frequently or between physician visits to help patients achieve set therapeutic goals.

Over the years, I have been able to build strong relationships with not only our staff of physicians and nurses but also with the patients who I routinely see. Providing anticoagulation and diabetes management allows me to see patients monthly—or more frequently when needed—and help them achieve and maintain their therapeutic goals. I also enjoy the challenge and excitement of helping a patient simplify a complex medication regimen or working with the patient and physician to develop a more cost-effective treatment plan. The role of pharmacists within the patient care team is continuing to grow, and my passion for this role is deepening. I am excited to see where the role of PCMH pharmacists is heading in the years ahead of us!