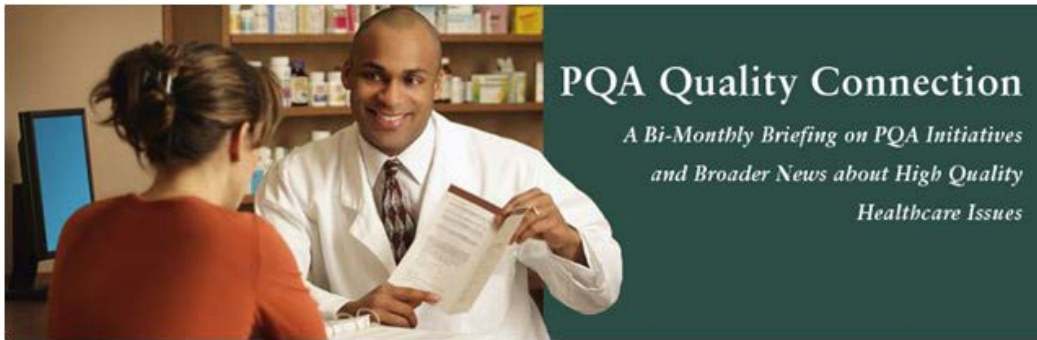




Hot Off the Press: Connections to Key Quality Publications

Hot Off the Press seeks to connect the reader to the most relevant and recent trials, reviews and commentaries related to health care quality with a focus on medication- and pharmacy-related topics.

Topic: Medication Reconciliation at Transitions of Care

- o **Citation:** Conklin J, Togami J, Burnett A, Dodd M, Ray G. Care transitions service: a pharmacy-driven program for medication reconciliation through the continuum of care. *American Journal Of Health-System Pharmacy: AJHP: Official Journal Of The American Society Of Health-System Pharmacists*. May 15, 2014; 71(10):802-10. doi: 10.2146/ajhp130589.
- o **Description:** University of New Mexico Hospital conducted a five-month evaluation of their Care Transitions Service (CTS), an ongoing pharmacy-driven program that provides medication reconciliation through the continuum of care. The initial assessment of the program's impact on rates of medication-related problems (MRPs) is highlighted in the practice report. Medication reconciliation at admission, discharge, and follow-up appointment was accompanied by hospital-to-community pharmacist handoff, as well as a follow-up phone call reminder from the inpatient pharmacist to address adherence and tolerance. These interventions found 1140 MRPs in a total of 191 patients over a five-month period, 70% of which were resolved independently of provider-review by pharmacy-driven protocols. Follow up evaluation of CTS outpatient services two-months post-discharge (n=16) found a decline in number of MRPs from admission in 80% of patients.

Topic: Specialty Medication Treatment Costs

- **Citation:** Brennan T, Shrank W. New Expensive Treatments for Hepatitis C Infection. JAMA: The Journal Of The American Medical Association. July 20, 2014. doi: 10.1001/jama.2014.8897. [Epub ahead of print]
- **Description:** Recognizing the drastic change in the approach to Hepatitis C treatment in the last three years, this commentary focuses on the key issues surrounding payment of new therapies. As the new standard of care, polymerase inhibitors introduce shorter treatment periods that are better tolerated and more effective than older treatments. However, the first-in-class of these agents, sofosbuvir, at a cost of over \$80,000 per course of therapy, has raised significant barriers for payors, providers, and patients in receiving it. The commentary first delves into the perspectives of market-driven health care and return on investment of the manufacturer, Gilead. It then applies a value-driven perspective, taking total cost of care, cost avoided, and quality of life into account. The authors claim that this is not an isolated Hepatitis C issue, but one that permeates several specialty markets, often with large potential pools of patients. They urge this issue not be approached in singularity, but with the overall cost of healthcare in mind.

Topic: Quality Measure Improvement

- **Citation:** Pringle JL, Boyer A, Conklin MH, McCullough JW, Aldridge A. The Pennsylvania Project: Pharmacist Intervention Improved Medication Adherence And Reduced Health Care Costs. Health Aff August 2014 33:1444-1452; doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2013.1398
- **Description:** Community pharmacists can dramatically help their patients stick to their prescription regimens, according to a new study led by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy. This article suggests also that greater adherence to medications can lead to a reduction in emergency room visits and hospital admissions, thereby lowering health care costs for a variety of chronic conditions including diabetes and asthma. About 70 percent of all Medicare patients get their prescriptions filled at neighborhood drug stores, but pharmacists can do more for patients than just prepare medications notes lead investigator Janice Pringle, PhD, associate professor and director of the Program Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at Pitt's School of Pharmacy. She also notes their training, knowledge and

community accessibility perhaps makes them the ideal health professionals to help people learn how and why to take their medications.