

Pandemic Planning Recommendations for Pharmacists

COVID-19 has multiplied the importance of pharmacists' involvement in pandemic planning. Key policies must be put in place for pharmacists to respond now to the COVID-19 pandemic; these will be important in the response to future pandemics as well. Below are several recommendations pharmacists can make during pandemic planning activities:

- » Involve pharmacists in state emergency response planning and coordination, including the request process and distribution plan for Personal Protective Equipment, ancillary medical supplies, and the state stockpile.
- » Involve pharmacists in the state plan for managing hospital surge capacity, directing patients to specific locations, and providing direction on criteria for when someone should be sent to a hospital.
- » Coordinate with the state health department for the ability to identify and track emerging infectious diseases through the reporting of positive test results.
- » Encourage states and health professionals to work together to identify barriers to earlier identification of cases and in what timeframe a person should be tested.
- » Remove legal barriers that prohibit pharmacists with valid licenses from operating across state lines and from doing remote work in certain states.
- » Advocate for workflow flexibilities that will help pharmacists serve patients in pandemics
 - » Independently evaluate and manage medications through therapeutic interchange
 - » Chronic care dose adjustment
 - » Refill authorizations
 - » Quantity modifications
 - » Early refills
 - » Prescriptions for more than a 30-day supply
 - » Emergency fills for non-controlled medications without a prescription when no refills remain
 - » Remove prior authorization requirements
- » Work with employers to ensure policies and protocols related to disaster preparedness allow the pharmacist flexibility to continue patient care with minimal interruptions while also protecting the staff.
- » Seek incorporation of education on pandemic management and pharmacists' roles in emergencies in curricula at colleges of pharmacy through the Center for the Advancement of Pharmacy Education (CAPE) outcomes and Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) standards.