

# Office-Based Medication Management

## Background

Office-based medication management involves the role of those pharmacists who are actively providing medication management in a variety of ways including medication therapy management (MTM) programs. Some pharmacists specialize in a given disease state and are affiliated with a medical practice while others work out of their own office.

These practitioners also are positioned to be involved with accountable care organizations (ACOs) and patient-centered medical homes (PCMHs). Of interest is the complexity that may exist for billing of services provided. Many of the pharmacy associations are working together for pharmacists to become recognized as providers; provider status will help as practitioners will be able to have the appropriate coding and billing requirements.

## Characteristics

Twenty-five office-based medication management pharmacists responded to the 2012 *APhA Career Pathway Evaluation Program* survey. Eighty-eight percent of respondents held an entry-level pharmacy degree; 81% held the PharmD degree, and 13% percent indicated that they also had a non-pharmacy bachelor's degree.

Forty-two percent had been through a residency program, 42% had been through a certificate training program, and 6% reported having been through some form of other training.

Respondents' average age was 44 years old. Eighty-one percent of respondents were female. Income data show 7% earn between \$80,000–\$100,000, while 64% earn \$100,000 or more per year, with 7% earning greater than \$150,000. The average time worked per week was 42 hours.

An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their job, with 54% indicating “extremely satisfied” and 38% indicating “somewhat satisfied.” Similarly, most respondents indicated that they felt the job was challenging, with 42% indicating “extremely challenging” and 54% indicating “somewhat challenging.”

## Insider's Perspective

### **What aspects of the job are most appealing?**

Two specific areas of these roles were listed as the most appealing aspects by the respondents. Twenty-four percent cited direct patient care and the flexibility they have in scheduling. Working with other health care professionals and autonomy were listed by 12% of the respondents as appealing aspects. Respondents also indicated that they spend 35% of their time on patient care services focused on the medication aspects of care.

One respondent stated that “working with patients to review their current medications for optimal pharmaceutical care while reducing medication duplication, errors, and cost” is a

very appealing aspect of the role. Another added that “working one on one with patients and physicians” is appealing.

**What aspects of the job are least appealing?**

Income was cited by 12% of pharmacists as the least appealing aspect of their jobs. Even with the lower income, these pharmacists are satisfied with the work they perform. Some also mentioned they do not enjoy having to repeatedly explain the value of what they do.

**What advice should students and practitioners consider when selecting the option of becoming an office-based medication management pharmacist?**

Twelve percent of pharmacists cited three distinct areas to consider for a role in office-based medication management: the importance of keeping up on reading the literature, being able to work independently, and staying motivated in an office-based environment. This is especially true as most students do not get exposed to this practice environment during their academic training.

One respondent summed up what many indicated, stating the need to do “many hours of reading to stay current on most up-to-date guidelines to ensure evidence-based medication therapy management.” Another stated the need to have a “high level of resolve to diplomatically yet firmly act as patient advocate in applying the patient’s wishes and best clinical practices often in the face of opposition from prescribers and sometimes family members.”

## Critical Factor Ratings

### **Interaction With People**

Interaction with people was cited by some pharmacists as the most appealing aspect of their work. As noted earlier, respondents reported that they spend 35% of their time in patient-focused care.

= 6.7



### **Conducting Physical Assessments**

Even with an office-based practice, these pharmacists conduct a low range of physical assessments. It should be noted that some of these pharmacists practice from a home-based office and communicate telephonically with patients.

= 3.8



### **Interpreting Laboratory Values**

Of interest is the fact that many respondents indicated that they do have access to lab values as they are in constant contact with the patient's health care team.

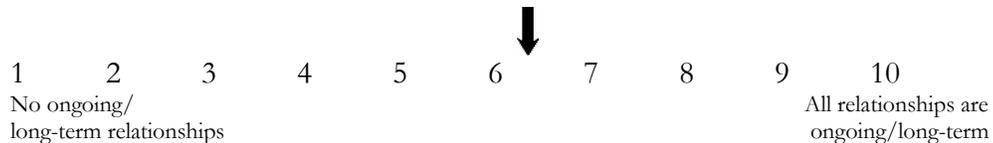
= 4.9



### **Continuity of Relationships**

The extent to which these pharmacists have ongoing or long-term relationships with patients varies. As noted earlier, working with patients is one of the more appealing aspects of this role, which links well to being upper mid-range in the responses.

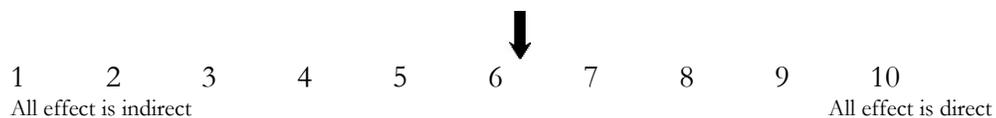
= 6.3



### **Helping People**

A pharmacist working in an office-based setting helps people in different ways. Sometimes the pharmacists work face-to-face with a patient, and other times they communicate via phone or e-mail.

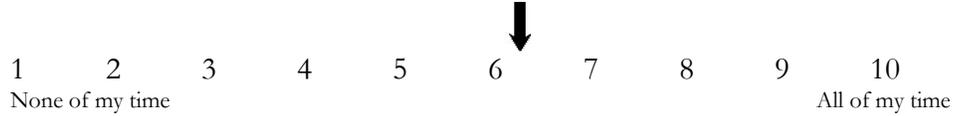
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### Collaboration With Other Professionals

Office-based medication management pharmacists indicated that they are mid-range in collaborating with other professionals. However, there are those who indicated that this was a higher than average part of their work.

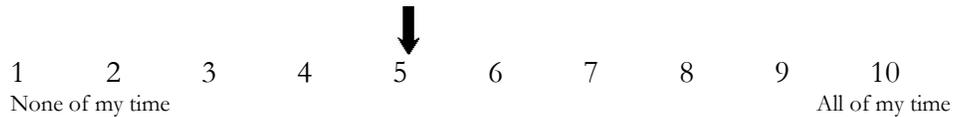
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### Educating Other Professionals

Pharmacists in an office-based environment have the opportunity to educate others in the practice. The response was mid-range for this critical factor.

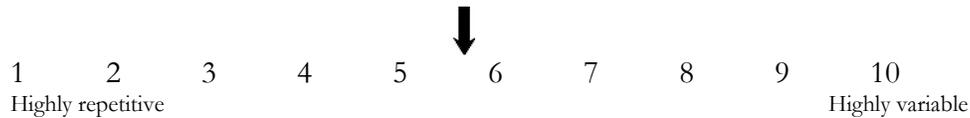
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### Variety of Daily Activities

The day-to-day workload of an office-based pharmacist often depends on the medication-related needs of patients. As a result, there is a good deal of variation in their practices.

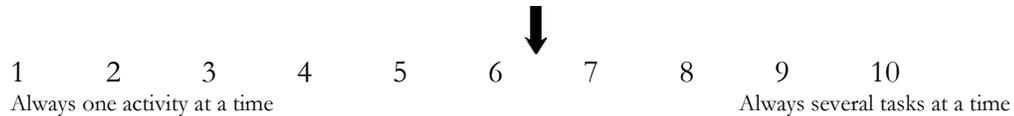
= 5.7



### Multiple Task Handling

There was fairly good agreement among office-based pharmacists that they deal with more than one task at a time. They provided a mid-range score on this question.

= 6.4



### Problem Solving

Pharmacists responding to the survey indicated that they are in the mid-range of the spectrum when it comes to problem solving. Some patients fit into a protocol that can be followed, however there are exceptions that require these pharmacists to problem solve situations.

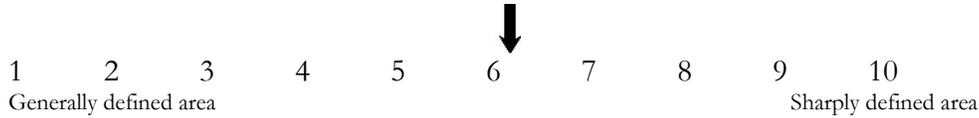
= 5.0



### Focus of Expertise

These pharmacists are mid-range when it comes to the focus of expertise. As mentioned earlier, a few pharmacists are specialized in a specific disease state based in the office environment.

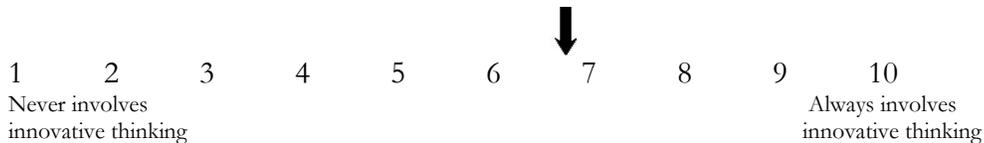
= 6.2



### Innovative Thinking

Some settings are well established and have highly defined expectations, duties, and responsibilities, whereas others will require innovative thinking to help shape and define the practice. A higher mid-range response indicates that this group leans toward innovative thinking in their practice setting.

= 6.8



### Applying Scientific Knowledge

Office-based pharmacists spend a good portion of their time applying scientific knowledge in their area of expertise, giving this factor a rating of 6.7. This may be due to the other health care providers that they work with and the ability to collaborate on patient care.

= 6.7



### Applying Medical Knowledge

Office-based pharmacists rated this as the highest-scored critical factor. They spend a great amount of time applying medical knowledge in their field. This differs slightly from the scientific knowledge as this relates more closely to the disease state medication management in which they participate.

= 8.6



### Creating New Knowledge by Conducting Research

This was the second lowest-rated critical factor. There is little opportunity to conduct research and participants place this in the low range of the scale at 3.7. Respondents spend less than 1% of their time in research.

= 3.7





### Part-Time Opportunities

Office-based practice does have opportunities for part-time roles. This may be based on the fact that some of these positions are not full time; some practitioners work part time in the office environment and their other time is in different roles/settings for the company.

= 4.9



### Job-Sharing Opportunities

Job sharing is not a common practice in this field because many times the idea is to have a consistent person for patient-centered care, especially in a PCMH model.

= 4.5



### Exit/Re-entry Opportunities

Because office-based practice continues to expand, there are opportunities to leave the area and then re-enter at an appropriate time.

= 5.2



### Parental Leave Opportunities

Parental leave opportunities ranked higher than others in the areas of work-related options. Most employers provide the opportunity for parental leave.

= 7.1



### Leisure/Family Time

As these respondents indicated that they have regular/predictable hours, it relates well that they also feel that they have opportunities for leisure/family time.

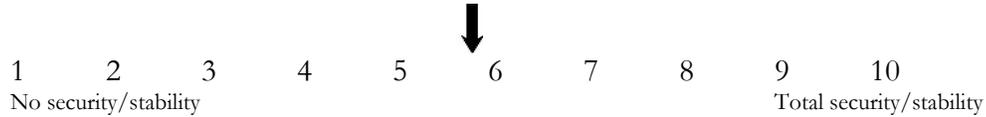
= 7.5



### Job Security

As the health system continues to change, increased pressures for accountability of clinical services continues to be a challenge that the profession must tackle. Because this group is already working with ACOs and PCMHs, they are in a better position to continue the role. Nevertheless, the office-based pharmacists listed this critical factor in the mid-range.

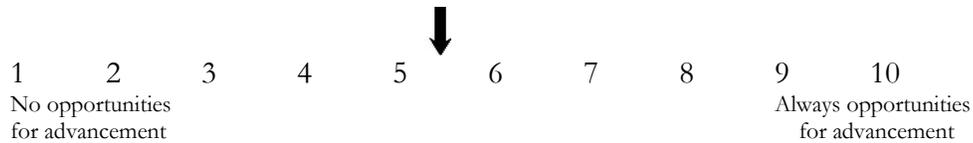
= 5.8



### Opportunities for Advancement

Pharmacists in an office-based environment have some opportunities for advancement. However, in many cases there is only one pharmacist who is providing the medication management services.

= 5.4



### Opportunities for Leadership Development

Respondents felt that they have opportunities for leadership development. As this historically is a nontraditional role, these practitioners have the opportunity to take a leadership role based on the smaller numbers of pharmacists who practice in this setting.

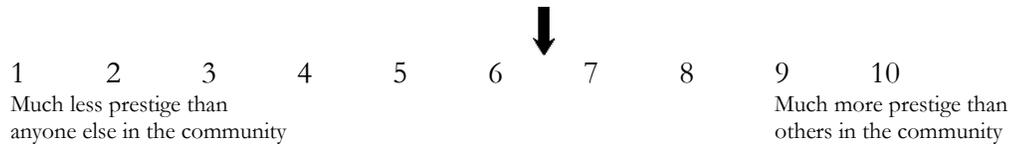
= 7.4



### Community Prestige

Pharmacists are well-respected health professionals. The extent to which their practice directly influences their prestige in the community depends on the visibility of their role to the general public.

= 6.5



### Professional Involvement

Active involvement in pharmacy meetings and events creates opportunities for professional development and the sharing of ideas and knowledge among peers. The extent to which a pharmacist gets involved is largely a personal decision, although these pharmacists indicated that this critical factor is in the upper mid-range level.

= 7.6



### Income

While office-based medication management pharmacists are in the upper mid-range on this response, this was one of the least appealing aspects related to the environment.

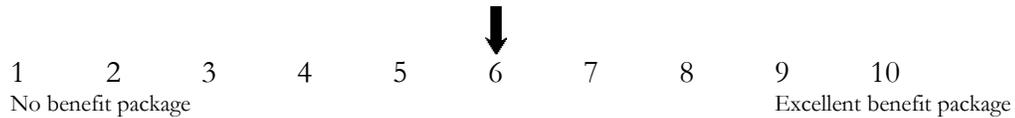
= 7.0



### Benefits (vacation, health, retirement)

Benefits often go hand-in-hand with salary. Most of the respondents indicated that they receive a reasonable benefits package.

= 6.0



### Geographic Location

Office-based practitioners are mid-range with regard to being able to practice in a number of geographic locations.

= 4.9



### Working Remotely

While many of these pharmacists work in an office environment, they do not feel that they are working remotely on a regular basis. However, it must be noted that a few of the respondents indicated that they work from home.

= 4.2



### Autonomy

Autonomy was the third highest-rated critical factor. As a licensed professional, pharmacists have been granted certain authorities and accepted certain responsibilities; as a result, pharmacists generally have autonomy within the professional scope of practice. This was also listed as one of the more appealing aspects of the role.

= 8.3



### Self-Worth

Self-worth is the second highest-rated critical factor for these practitioners. Office-based medication management pharmacists have a career that fulfills personal and professional ideals. There is general agreement among these pharmacists that their practice creates self-worth.

= 8.5



### Future Focus

Depending on the position, pharmacists can be on the cutting edge of science in their respective disciplines. In addition, many of these pharmacists are looking at a population health focus.

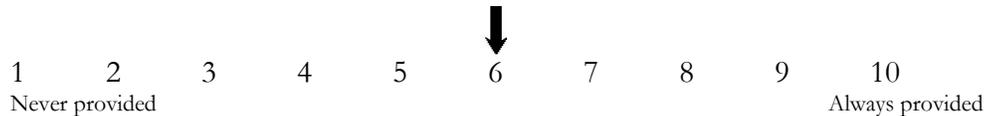
= 7.4



### Professional Prestige

Pharmacists in an office-based practice have opportunities to make a name for themselves through achievements in practice. Respondents were mid-range on their responses.

= 6.0



### Unique Practice Environment

This critical factor is in the upper range level. Office-based practice is a unique environment especially when compared with traditional community and institutional practice environments.

= 7.9





### Writing

Respondents were in the mid-range regarding writing. Some were more inclined to include the writing they needed to prepare for the documentation of the medication management that they performed.

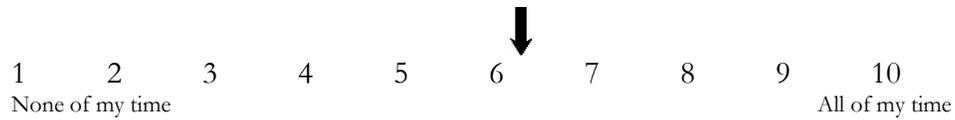
= 4.4



### Working With Teams

Respondents tend to have some team-related projects. This makes sense based on the setting and a PCMH environment.

= 6.1



### Mean Scores for Critical Factors

1. Interaction With People	6.7
2. Conducting Physical Assessments	3.8
3. Interpreting Laboratory Values	4.9
4. Continuity of Relationships	6.3
5. Helping People	6.2
6. Collaboration With Other Professionals	6.2
7. Educating Other Professionals	5.0
8. Variety of Daily Activities	5.7
9. Multiple Task Handling	6.4
10. Problem Solving	5.0
11. Focus of Expertise	6.2
12. Innovative Thinking	6.8
13. Applying Scientific Knowledge	6.7
14. Applying Medical knowledge	8.6
15. Creating New Knowledge by Conducting Research	3.7
16. Management/Supervision of Others	3.7
17. Management/Supervision of a Business	4.1
18. Pressure/Stress	6.7
19. Work Schedule	7.3
20. Part-Time Opportunities	4.9
21. Job-Sharing Opportunities	4.5
22. Exit/Re-entry Opportunities	5.2
23. Parental Leave Opportunities	7.1
24. Leisure/Family Time	7.5
25. Job Security	5.8
26. Opportunities for Advancement	5.4
27. Opportunities for Leadership Development	7.4
28. Community Prestige	6.5
29. Professional Involvement	7.6
30. Income	7.0
31. Benefits (vacation, health, retirement)	6.0
32. Geographic Location	4.9
33. Working Remotely	4.2
34. Autonomy	8.3
35. Self-Worth	8.5
36. Future Focus	7.4
37. Professional Prestige	6.0
38. Unique Practice Environment	7.9
39. Advanced Degree	4.1
40. Entrepreneurial Opportunity	5.8
41. Additional Training	6.8
42. Interacting With Colleagues	7.1
43. Travel	2.7
44. Writing	4.4
45. Working With Teams	6.1

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<http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/29/5/906.full>

## Professional Organizations

**American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP)**  
13000 W. 87th Street Parkway, Lenexa, KS 66215  
Tel: 913-492-3311 Fax: 913-492-0088  
[www.accp.com](http://www.accp.com)

**American Pharmacists Association (APhA)**

2215 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20037

Tel: 800-237-APhA Fax: 202-783-2351

[www.pharmacist.com](http://www.pharmacist.com)

**American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP)**

7272 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814

Tel: 301-657-3000

[www.ashp.org](http://www.ashp.org)

**National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA)**

100 Daingerfield Road, Alexandria, VA 22314

Tel: 703-683-8200 Toll-Free: 800-544-7447 Fax: 703-683-3619

[www.ncpanet.org](http://www.ncpanet.org)