



Chapter 11

Community Pharmacy Practice Experiences

The majority of pharmacy candidates will have some experience in community retail pharmacies through workshops, internships, or part-time employment. Under the supervision of an affiliated faculty preceptor from the pharmacy school, you will practice skills essential for the effective delivery of patient care.

If you are not placed in an independently owned retail pharmacy, you will probably be assigned to one of the major pharmacy chains (see Table 11-1).



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Table 11-1. Some Well-Known Chain Pharmacies in the United States

Name
● Walgreens
● CVS
● Target
● Wal-Mart
● Longs Drugs
● Rite Aid

If you have already worked in any one of these pharmacies, it is likely you will be assigned to a different chain. Some may argue that it is best to remain where you already know the protocols, system, and workflow. However, being exposed to an entirely dissimilar way of approaching dispensing, counseling, record-keeping, and prescription entry during your PPE will diversify your training and help you learn different ways of approaching tasks.

Interacting With Your Colleagues

It is important for you to interact positively with your colleagues in the community pharmacy. In addition to working with your pharmacist preceptor (usually the pharmacy manager or a staff pharmacist) you will develop working relationships with the pharmacy technicians and possibly even employees outside of the pharmacy, such as the store manager, floor clerks, etc. Some community retail PPEs may also provide exposure to corporate aspects of the operation and give you the opportunity to meet executive and upper level administration, such as regional pharmacy managers and the Director of Operations.

Special Projects During Community PPEs

During your PPE, you may take part in many projects in the pharmacy and also in outreach efforts in the community. These may include:

- “Brown-bag” lunches for store staff and community members to educate them about their current medications.
- In-services for the pharmacy on workflow and process improvements.
- Disease state informational sessions for staff and community.
- Antibiotic follow-up for adults and children.

Community Pharmacy Tasks

In addition to these projects and opportunities, there are some basic skills that you will be required to demonstrate. Practicing the following tasks will sharpen your retail phar-

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macy and patient care skills.

Tasks you may be asked to perform include:

- Entering a patient prescription at the receiving window and/or by fax, email, and telephone.
- Starting and/or updating a patient's medication profile.
- Checking a patient's allergies and noting the specific type of reaction(s).
- Submitting a prescription insurance claim electronically or manually.
- Filling a prescription and applying the correct label to the vial.
- Verifying the finished product against the original prescription order.
- Counseling the patient upon receiving the prescription, especially if it is for a new medication.
- Filling prescriptions appropriately according to the pharmacy's standard practice.
- Working on inventory control, including controlled substances (CV-CII).
- Managing the employee schedule.
- Counseling for and recommending OTC products.

- Contacting third party insurers for issues relating to a patient's medication coverage.
- Discussing any prior authorization problems with the patient, health care professional and/or state health department.

Since you are considered a temporary employee at your retail pharmacy, you must abide by that specific company's rules and regulations, including those covering dress code, breaks/lunch schedules, and patient interaction. Make sure that you go over these specific company policies with preceptors or the store manager. Even something as simple as parking improperly could lead to unnecessary complications during your PPE.

Notes