Community Pharmacy Practice Accreditation: Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: What is the intent of community pharmacy practice accreditation?

Answer: Accreditation is the process by which a private association, organization or government agency, after initial and periodic evaluations, grants recognition to an organization, site or program that has met certain established criteria. Our healthcare system has placed an increasing focus on quality and performance measures related to the provider sites and practitioners.

The voluntary community pharmacy practice accreditation program will be focused on accrediting community pharmacy practices to recognize quality, enhance patient safety and provide a mechanism for excellence-committed community pharmacy practices to distinguish themselves.

A community pharmacy practice accreditation program may provide the means:
- to ensure measurable, safe and effective patient care is being provided.
- to empower pharmacists to practice at a higher level.
- for a critical mass of pharmacy practices to achieve the JCPP 2015 Vision for Pharmacy Practice
- for pharmacy practice networks to recognize and provide consistent care to patients

Question 2: Why is now the time for the development of community pharmacy practice accreditation?

Answer: An examination of recent healthcare trends indicates an increasing focus on the creation of mechanisms to identify providers and practice sites that can deliver quality health care, improve patient outcomes and use resources effectively. Several entities have indicated an interest in accreditation for community pharmacy practices. The Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation (CPPA) took a leadership role steered by the pharmacy professional organizations, which will ensure pharmacist involvement in shaping the use and direction of the standards for pharmacy practice accreditation programs.

Question 3: What is the Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation?

Answer: The Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation (CPPA) is a partnership between the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) and the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) to develop and implement comprehensive programs of pharmacy practice site accreditation. CPPA will oversee the development and implementation of the accreditation standards and the accreditation process for the community pharmacy practice accreditation program with an expected program rollout in 2013. CPPA contracted with APhA for the continued development of consensus-based standards for community pharmacy practice sites. The standards will be utilized in the accreditation process. APhA engaged Thomas R. Temple, BPharm, MS, retired Iowa Pharmacy Association CEO, to coordinate the development process for community pharmacy practice standards. CPPA will contract with NABP to administer the accreditation process. NABP has done some initial work with key community pharmacy stakeholders to test various approaches to the accreditation process.

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**Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation**

**Question 4:** What are the general steps and timing in the establishment of community pharmacy practice accreditation standards?

**Answer:** No matter what pharmacy practice accreditation program one would consider, the development of the standards should be facilitated by the profession with input from all key stakeholders. This is important if we are to craft informed, obtainable standards and a manageable accreditation process.

Stakeholders and interested parties have the opportunity to comment on proposed standards from June 30 - August 15, 2012. Finalization of the standards is anticipated by late 2012 with the community pharmacy practice accreditation program available for full participation beginning in 2013.

The process for the establishment of standards will follow recognized guidelines\(^2\) that include:

i. openness;
ii. balance of interest;
iii. due process;
iv. consensus
   a. defined as general agreement, but not necessarily unanimity, and includes a process for attempting to resolve objections by interested parties, as long as
      i. all comments have been fairly considered,
      ii. each objector is advised of the disposition of his or her objection(s) and the reasons why,
      iii. consensus body members are given an opportunity to change their votes after reviewing the comments.

**Question 5:** Will every community pharmacy practice have to be visited to be accredited?

**Answer:** Accreditation should be applied equally to all pharmacies, practice sites and other entities seeking accreditation. While we have the principles for the process, the methodology to be utilized is still to be determined.

**Question 6:** Isn’t licensure by boards of pharmacy adequate?

**Answer:** Licensure ensures minimal practice standards, while accreditation distinguishes a commitment to enhanced safety and improved quality of care delivered within the practice. An accreditation program is a voluntary process designed for pharmacy practices that wish to distinguish themselves based on the level and quality of pharmacy services they provide. It is not intended to replace or fill gaps in the work of boards of pharmacy created by state funding and resource challenges. These issues need to be addressed by the boards of pharmacy and pharmacy organizations in each state with support by NABP.

**Question 7:** Given the current economic environment, would an accreditation program for community pharmacy practices be burdensome and costly if the compensation model does not recognize the value of the accreditation?

**Answer:** Pharmacy practices that undergo accreditation and deliver advanced patient care services should be fairly compensated for going the additional step. The positive value of accreditation on the future of quality health care is a regular discussion point in talks with the payer and stakeholder community. The potential value of accreditation and the current compensation models were both carefully considered in the decision to make the pharmacy practice accreditation program voluntary.

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\(^2\) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-119
Question 8: Will the accreditation program impact individuals or pharmacy practices?

Answer: The accreditation program will accredit pharmacy practice sites, not certify individual practitioners. However, the standards might recognize existing individual competencies as a means of achieving quality care delivery and outcomes.

Question 9: Will pharmacy practice accreditation create barriers to pharmacy recognition and compensation?

Answer: Pharmacy practice accreditation is a voluntary process that serves as a mechanism to advance practice and provide recognition for practices at a higher level than basic licensure. Any pharmacy practice willing to meet accreditation standards should be able to continue provider network participation if the network requires accreditation at some point in the future.

Question 10: Could accreditation be useful in addressing pharmacy workplace issues?

Answer: With accreditation standards focused on quality improvement and safety of the care provided to patients within community pharmacy, the assumption could be made that processes within the accredited pharmacy would address distractions and other care delivery concerns from the perspectives of patient outcomes and patient safety.

About the Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation
The Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation (CPPA) is a partnership between the American Pharmacists Association and the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy. CPPA develops and implements comprehensive programs of pharmacy practice site accreditation, including the promotion, development and maintenance of principles, policies and standards. CPPA offers the general public and users of pharmacy services a means of identifying those pharmacies that satisfy the accreditation criteria and are focused on advancing patient care, safety and quality. For more information, please visit http://cppa.pharmacist.com.