Advanced Pharmacy Technician Role

Informatics Technician

Mile Bluff Medical Center
Mauston, WI

Primary Intended Outcome(s)

- Short term goals are to work with IT staff to create and implement an integrated, universal Electronic Health Record (EHR)
- Long term goals are to develop an individual who can manage, maintain, and advance all of the various pharmacy-related IT products (EHR, automated dispensing cabinets, smart pumps, etc.) while working with the clinical staff to develop templated, efficient documentation

Site Description

- Mile Bluff Medical Center (MBMC) is located in Mauston, WI and includes a 40-bed acute care hospital, two 60-bed nursing homes, a 12-bed assisted living facility, sleep center, and 5 outreach medical centers
- The MBMC department of pharmacy consists of 1 management FTE, 2.6 pharmacist FTE, and 3.4 technician FTE (0.6 of technician FTE devoted to Informatics Technician position)

Advanced Role Description

- Provide and manage new medication build for the primary pharmacy system
- Integrate medication with the automated dispensing cabinet software
- Manage smart pump library with pharmacist support
- Ensure charges to patient through EHR are accurate

Necessary Tools and Resources

- Access to EHR test and live environments
- EHR resource binder provided by the EHR vendor
- Direct contact information to Mile Bluff Medical IT department for support
- Direct contact information for EHR vendor customer support

Misty Kline, CPhT
• Ability to submit “tasks” to EHR vendor if issue cannot be solved by technician

• Desktop computer with dual screens

Training and/or Education Requirements
• Pharmacy technician certification* is required for all technicians working at Mile Bluff Medical Center
• Skillsets and interests that contribute to success in the position are effective time management, confidence, proactivity, and taking the time to get to know co-workers and their families
• No additional formal training is required at this time, however a motivated individual who is a critical-thinker and problem-solver is essential

*Technician certification is not currently required by the state of Wisconsin for pharmacy technicians

Revenue and Expense Parameters & Outcome Measures
• Clinical outcomes are measured to help validate the position and its responsibilities
• Turnaround times of medication
• Turnaround time of reports
• Number of medication histories completed
• New pharmacy services offered as a direct results of the EHR development
• Turnaround times of changes within the pharmacy module
• Milestone achievement on various projects

Preparing for Role Implementation/Lessons Learned
• As EHRs become more sophisticated, there will be an increasing need for pharmacy staff involvement
• Mile Bluff Medical Center pharmacy staff feels that much of the work involved in maintaining and developing the pharmacy material within an EHR can be done just as well, if not better, by an experienced technician
• Required skill set includes the following: problem-solver, critical-thinker, and have the ability to turn multi-factorial problems into useful electronic solutions
• Ensure appropriate and proactive development of the job description for a rapidly evolving role such as this one
• Ensure appropriate and proactive development of policies to direct the structure in which the technician works
• Be comfortable with the idea of devoting only partial FTE to this position at first, then as value is proven to senior leadership, preparing to differentiate FTE as the need grows
Realized Benefits

- **Patient care**
  - The Informatics Technician position was created to allow a pharmacist to move from the informatics position and into clinical practice. The Informatics Technician position has been a more cost-effective resource.
  - The creation of the Informatics Technician position has allowed one of Mile Bluff Medical Center’s pharmacists to devote approximately 16 hours of work per week to more clinically focused and patient-centered activities.
  - Database of medications is kept up-to-date closer to real-time due to the devoted technician full-time equivalent.
  - Number of medication histories performed has increased 100% due to freed up pharmacist time.
  - New pharmacy services are able to be implemented, such as antibiotic stewardship (antibiotic dosing, kinetics, culture review, disease state interventions), monitoring of medication related labs, and immunization recommendations and documentation.
  - Leveraging skill-mix within any institution can elevate and advance the practice of pharmacy by allowing the pharmacist to focus on patient-centered activities.

- **Controlled substance diversion prevention**
  - This position has become a primary support for the Mile Bluff Medical Center controlled substance diversion detection and prevention project through data provision and documentation.

- **Interdisciplinary relationships**
  - Frequent communication with the emergency department staff, nursing staff, operating room staff, cancer care staff, and physicians who will be using these new functions is essential.
  - Network of EHR “super-users” among departments is growing as the EHR build becomes increasingly robust.

Future Opportunities

- At least one full FTE will hopefully be devoted to this position (currently 0.6 FTE) in the near future so Misty can do full-time informatics in this advanced technician role.