Abstract:

Statement of Problem: Identifying an innovative, evolving structure to a hospital intern program that benefits both the institution and the pharmacy students.

Innovation Objective: In an effort to benefit both the medical institutions and pharmacy students, the intern program at Denver Health Medical Center (DHMC) has evolved and grown to meet these expectations. This project describes the structure and progression of a hospital intern program which is primarily sustained by a team of pharmacy student interns. The goal of this project is to describe an innovative structure for intern programs in order to make functioning intern programs an integral component of hospital inpatient pharmacies.

Program Description: The intern program includes pharmacy students that are currently enrolled in a traditional four-year pharmacy program. Every intern hired builds an operational foundation which includes pharmacy technician training consisting of; automated medication dispensing cabinet operation, narcotic laws and protocols, inpatient pharmacy computer systems (Siemens), IV compounding, and general inpatient pharmacy operation. Interns also work specified shifts that correspond to their pharmacy school curriculum. Once interns have learned anticoagulation in school, they perform anticoagulation assessments, plans, and educations. Interns provide other medication educations for naloxone, Epipen, Diastat, and intranasal midazolam for both the Emergency Department and the Pediatric Department. Interns also receive experience in the Pediatric Department of DHMC that allows them to round with the pediatric medical team, learn and practice weight-based dosing of medications, and provide vaccinations. The varied shifts and broad training allow pharmacy interns to be utilized in many ways allowing for continual evolution, constant benefit, and success of both the program and pharmacy interns.

Findings to Date: By providing operational and clinical services, DHMC receives financial cost-savings benefits from pharmacy interns. The cost savings between interns providing clinical and operational services is $25,400 annually (based on internal cost-savings analysis). The benefits to the pharmacy intern include operational and clinical experience in an inpatient hospital setting. Initiating an innovative and evolving pharmacy student intern program in a hospital setting can be extremely beneficial to both the medical institution and the student.

Next Steps: Further research is needed to identify if the gained experience positively affects residency and job placement.