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Pharmacy Initiative Positively Impacts Patient Readmissions

Thad Franz, PharmD, Outpatient Pharmacist

In July of 2010, Nationwide Children's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy started an initiative which focused on encouraging asthma patients to receive their medications before discharge from the hospital. This initiative complemented Nationwide Children's overall goal to decrease asthma hospital readmissions by 50 percent before January 2012.

The National Institutes of Health Asthma Guidelines recommend a focus on discharge education for asthma patients going home on medications. The benefit of filling the discharge medications at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy include:

- Patients leave with medication(s) in hand to increase overall compliance.
- Specialty-trained pediatric pharmacists fill, check, and dispense the patient's asthma medications. Outpatient pharmacists check all discharge prescriptions with the inpatient medical record to make sure medications are appropriate for discharge.
- All patients are counseled by a trained pharmacist or pharmacy intern and are provided additional resources to increase their knowledge and confidence with the management of their medications.

Data has shown that filling medications at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Outpatient Pharmacy upon discharge has an impact on hospital readmissions. Our efforts focus on increasing awareness of the

pharmacy services provided to the staff and patient families. Staff is made aware of the initiative through in-services which explain the benefits of encouraging patients to have their medications in hand upon discharge. Daily rounds are made by our outpatient pharmacist to ensure patients and families are aware



of the service and we provide an opportunity for them to ask questions. These efforts produced more than a 30 percent increase in asthma patients filling at the outpatient pharmacy, as well as a significant impact on decreased hospital readmissions. As we look to the future and the opening of Nationwide Children's new hospital tower, which will house an additional outpatient pharmacy, we have an opportunity to make an even larger impact on our patients. We plan to expand the "Don't Leave Without Them" concept to other populations and locations within the inpatient and outpatient settings of Nationwide Children's.