The Affordable Care Act and Pharmacists: A Qualitative Survey on the Perceptions of Healthcare Reform

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Evelyn R. Hermes. Affordable Pharmacists’ names and respective organizations were not specify†.

The majority of respondents were either in the first five years of their careers, or had been practicing for greater than 20 years.

Nearly 75% were familiar with the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH); 24% respondents were not familiar with the term. Nearly 30% of respondents “comfortably” or “very comfortably” identified the definition of the PCMH and 60% were “comfortable” executing disease management programs associated with the PCMH. 54% were “comfortable” applying a 10 minute counseling session for a new patient’s medication adherence.

Only 50% of respondents were “comfortable” or “very comfortable” with their knowledge regarding health care reform. Nearly 25% were comfortable in participating in the Bundled Payment Program and applying for CMS Innovation Center grants available by the CMS Innovation Center. The Affordable Care Act and Pharmacists: A Qualitative Survey on the Perceptions of Healthcare Reform.

Introduction

In March of 2010 the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and the accompanying Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act were signed into law by President Obama. Together, these laws have been called “health care reform.” Several provisions within each law will take effect over a period of time, however, the impact of these provisions is still uncertain. There have been publications describing pharmacists’ role and potential of implementation of the PPACA, but these changes can only occur once pharmacists understand the various provisions that can affect or improve patient’s healthcare needs. There is a need to qualitatively assess the current level of understanding among practicing US pharmacists regarding the implementation of the PPACA provisions.

Objectives

To assess the level of understanding pharmacists in various practice settings have about health care reform provisions, in order to identify gaps in knowledge.

Methods

A literature search of existing publications was conducted via Medline and Google Scholar using Key words relating to both the profession of pharmacy and health care reform.

The PPACA and Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act were accessed using the Library of Congress website.

Survey, was distributed electronically to pharmacists currently practicing in the state of New Jersey. The survey was designed as such since many pharmacists work in more than one setting, either full or part time in the context of the New Jersey pharmacy workforce survey.

Total surveys completed = 223

• 64% of respondents correctly identified the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act as the specific act commonly referred to as the “health care reform”

• 92% of respondents correctly identified the abbreviation “PPACA”

• 74% of respondents correctly identified the definition of a Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH); 24% respondents were not familiar with the term.

When asked what types of future education around health care reform would be preferred, respondents studied each opinion equally. Options included: real live, face-to-face (55%), webinar (49%), printed materials (49%), and e-mail updates (52%).

Discussion

Pharmacists are aware of the common provisions of the Affordable Care Act but not as familiar with the specific provisions affecting them, such as the opportunity to apply for grants within the CMS Innovation Center and provisions affecting medication therapy management and chronic disease state management. In addition, there are opportunities for pharmacists to participate in shaping the changing healthcare delivery system in concert with the Affordable Care Organization and the Patient Centered Medical Home. Further education is needed to increase pharmacists’ awareness of the potential for new roles, and this can be done with multiple education methods.

Conclusions

Pharmacists should be familiar with the "PCMH" concept; 40% of respondents were not familiar with the term. Nearly 30% of respondents “comfortably” or “very comfortably” identified the definition of the PCMH and 60% were “comfortable” executing disease management programs associated with the PCMH.

Limitations

• The survey was not set up to collect information regarding regional location of respondents.

• All questions may not directly pertain to all practice settings (i.e., MTM services in the industry setting).

• “Check all that apply” and open ended questions made data analysis more difficult for doing generalizable conclusions.

References


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