Community pharmacies may apply now for new accreditation program

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Outpatient pharmacy practices seeking recognition for their high-quality, safe, and efficient patient care are invited to apply for the Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation’s (CPPA) voluntary new accreditation program. The program is up and running and accepting applications.

CPPA, a nonprofit organization, was established in 2012 by APhA, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), and the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) to recognize pharmacy practices for providing patient care services that improve health outcomes and contribute to lower health care costs.

“Accreditation is an important and well-established model to demonstrate excellence to patients, payers, health care providers, and the public,” said CPPA Executive Director Lynnae Mahaney, BSPharm, MBA, FASHIP, in a news release announcing the program.

Steps to accreditation

The accreditation process, which takes about 6 to 9 months, consists of an application, submission of documents, a site survey, and determination of accreditation status. The application, detailed information, and resources are available on CPPA’s website at http://pharmacypracticeaccredit.org/.

“Practices and pharmacists who have gone through accreditation find the process very valuable,” Mahaney told Pharmacy Today. “They document, revise, and improve their procedures. And they often look at new services and patient care offerings they could develop. Accreditation helps move our practices forward.”

The first step in preparing for the process is a self-assessment—available on CPPA’s website—to determine whether your practice meets the standards, which focus on three areas: practice management, patient care services, and quality improvement. A practice site may realize it lacks documentation around patient care services, or doesn’t really have an organizational structure description,” Mahaney said. The self-assessment can help sites create an action plan to prepare for accreditation.

The next step is to submit the application, along with documentation on business and ownership information, personnel, and facility licensure. After reviewing the application to make sure it’s complete, CPPA will send an invoice for the accreditation process.

Once CPPA has received payment, the practice will use CPPA’s Policy and Procedure (P&P) Assessment tool to collect, organize, and submit policies, procedures, and documents demonstrating compliance with the standards. CPPA’s review of a pharmacy’s P&Ps is “an ongoing discussion with the practice” to prepare for the site survey, Mahaney said. When the documentation is complete and verified, CPPA will notify the practice that it is eligible for the site survey.

What will surveyors look for?

The surveyor, a pharmacist, will conduct the site survey within 6 weeks of the notification during an unannounced visit. Surveyors will want to see your practice’s patient care services in action. The surveyor will observe the pharmacy, patient care areas, and prescription processing; review records; look at products and storage conditions; observe counseling and patient care services; view patient profiles and records; and talk with personnel.

After the site survey is complete, the surveyor will inform your site in writing of any outstanding items noted, including missing documentation or areas that were not in compliance or didn’t meet the standards, and request an action plan to address any issues.

When all outstanding items from the site survey are completed, CPPA’s Accreditation Process Oversight Committee will make an accreditation status determination. The committee is a volunteer group of pharmacists with expertise in community pharmacy practice who have been appointed by each of the partner organizations. Mahaney notifies sites of the committee’s decision.

CPPA staff standing by

Three practice sites began CPPA pilot testing late last year—a small chain, an independently owned community pharmacy, and a health system–based discharge pharmacy. Two have completed the accreditation process and are awaiting accreditation status determination, Mahaney told Today. Pilot testing has allowed CPPA to fully test the entire process, including policy and procedure assessment and site surveys.

“After years of work to get it right, to listen carefully to stakeholders, and to construct realistic standards that will make a difference in patient care, the window of opportunity is now open!” wrote APhA Executive Vice President and CEO Thomas E. Menighan, BSPharm, MBA, ScD (Hon), FAPhA, in a recent CEO Blog post on pharmacist.com.

CPPA staff are standing by to answer questions from pharmacy practices interested in applying. Said Mahaney, “We’re staffed and ready to help.”

In the works: Specialty pharmacy accreditation program

In January 2014, CPPA began developing specialty pharmacy practice standards. The organization expects to complete accreditation standards and begin the pilot program for specialty pharmacy practices by midsummer and accept applications for the program by the end of 2014.

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