

# Establishment of a pharmacy intern program to obtain pre-operative medication histories for patients scheduled for surgery: 18 months of experience

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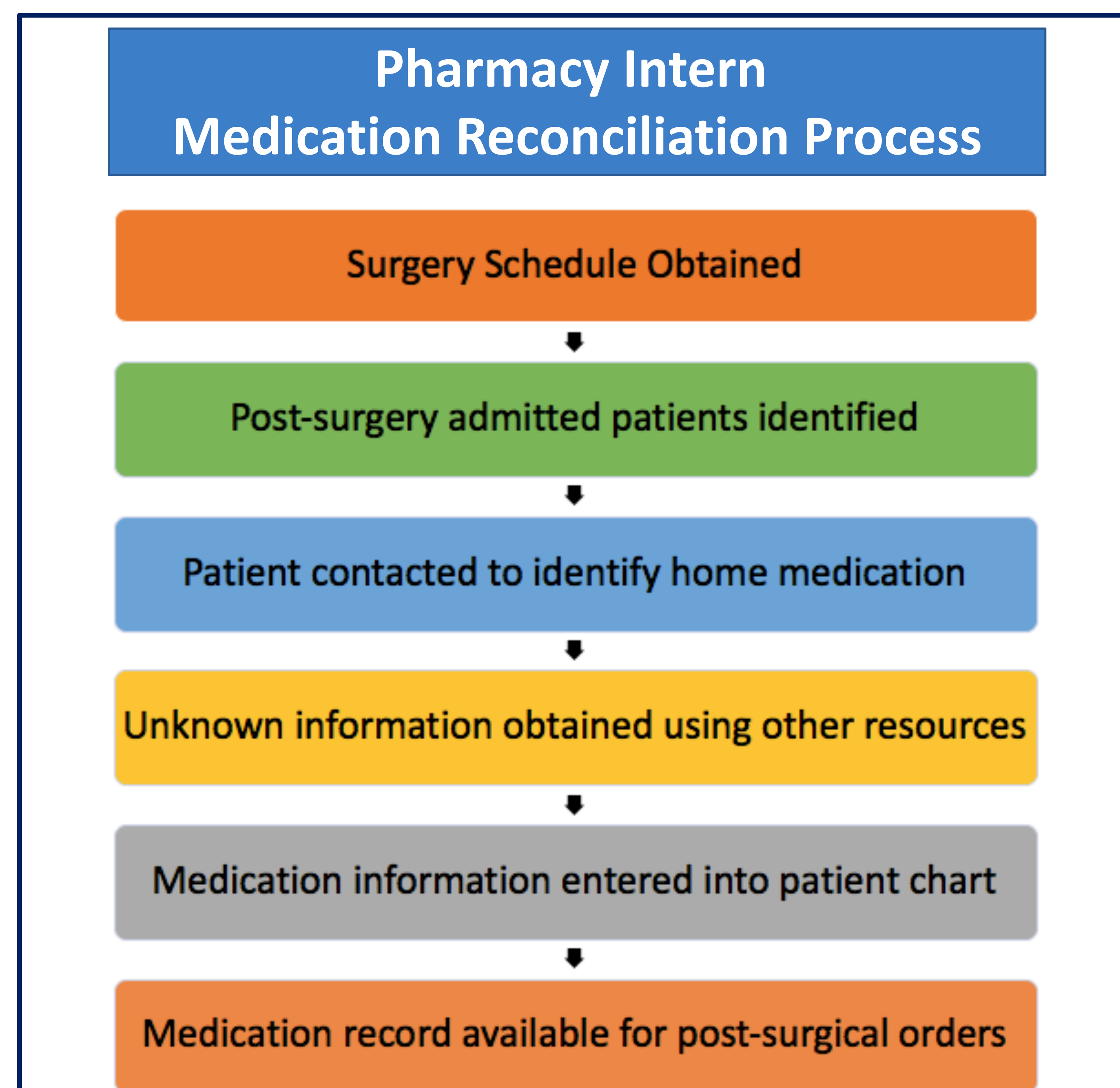
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## Background:

- Intermountain Healthcare implemented computerized physician order entry (CPOE) in 2015.
- Surgeons at McKay-Dee Hospital began to order home medications via CPOE from patients' home medication lists in the electronic medical record.
- Nurses have traditionally collected the surgery patients' medication histories, resulting in frequent inaccuracies and errors.
- Pharmacists were spending much more time than before CPOE to correct these issues.
- To improve this process, a pharmacy intern program was established to obtain a complete and accurate home medication list in an effort to improve medication safety and the use of healthcare resources.

## Methods:

- In January 2016, McKay-Dee Hospital Pharmacy Department recruited four pharmacy interns to initiate pre-operative medication history phone calls.
- Each patient scheduled for same-day admission surgery is called two business days in advance to obtain the medication list.
- Interns use information from the patient, external prescription history, and outpatient pharmacies to ensure accurate information.
- Each weeknight between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm, 15-25 patients are called. Medication histories are entered into the electronic medical record, and any patients who were unable to be contacted are called the next day by a pharmacy technician or intern.



## Results:

- The pharmacy interns at McKay-Dee Hospital have been completing pre-operative medication history calls for over 18 months, resulting in numerous positive outcomes.
- Benefits of the program include:
  - Increased accuracy and completeness
  - Reduction in medication errors
  - Improved patient safety
  - Less pharmacist time spent correcting errors
  - Less work in-hospital to confirm home medications
- Data has shown that medication histories collected by pharmacy staff are more accurate than those collected by nurses, which coincides with our experience.<sup>1</sup>
- Research also shows that pharmacy intern involvement in patient care leads to a reduction in medication errors, which we observed at our institution.<sup>2,3</sup>
- There has been a positive response from pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, nurses, and surgeons, corresponding to previous research, and highlighting the success of this program.<sup>4</sup>

## Conclusions:

- Implementing a pharmacy intern program to conduct pre-operative medication history phone calls to patients scheduled for same-day admission surgeries is an effective way to utilize pharmacy interns to improve patient outcomes.
- Pharmacy interns are especially qualified for this role due to specialized training and background with the ability to assess patient-reported medications, doses and frequencies for accuracy, and recognize therapeutic duplications and correct dosage forms.

## References:

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