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HEALTH CARE EXPERTS REACH CONSENSUS ON PERSONAL MEDICATION RECORDS PARAMETERS

BETHESDA, Md.--Experts representing nearly all sectors of health care met in Bethesda this week to tackle one of the most challenging obstacles to the smooth delivery of care facing patients and their health care providers today. The Continuity of Care in Medication Use Summit, hosted by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) and the ASHP Research and Education Foundation, focused specifically on the need for a standardized personal medication records (PMRs) system.

PMRs, whether paper or electronic, are critical in helping health care professionals ensure continued best care for patients as they move across different settings of care. While many organizations have developed PMRs, there is no national standard regarding the data that a PMR should contain, and many barriers exist that prevent using them effectively.

Over the past 2 days, 30 health professionals from numerous disciplines, representatives of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality-funded Centers for Education and Research on Therapeutics, consumers and consumer organizations, and social marketing experts met to discuss a “best standard” for PMRs and to determine how they can be used most effectively in ensuring high-quality patient care.

The group has reached a consensus on a minimum set of data elements that must be included in a PMR. They have also identified and discussed barriers and resolutions to the use of PMRs by patients, caregivers, and health professionals. A framework has been set up for further research and a national social marketing campaign aimed at enhancing patient, caregiver and health professional awareness of integrating the PMR into all aspects of the health care process.

“The ASHP Foundation and ASHP are leaders in continuity of care as it relates to medication use,” says Daniel J. Cobaugh, Pharm.D., ASHP Foundation Director of Research and Program Development. “Through this summit, we have taken the lead on a major step that the World Health Organization and the Joint Commission laid out in their nine Patient Safety Solutions – a record of a patient’s current medications.”

A summary of the Summit’s proceedings will be available later this month, and a white paper will be authored outlining the minimum data elements of a PMR.

ABOUT THE ASHP FOUNDATION

The ASHP Research and Education Foundation was established in 1968 by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. The mission of the Foundation is to improve the health and well-being of patients in hospitals and health systems through appropriate, safe and effective medication use. The Foundation provides leadership and conducts education and research activities that foster the coordination of interdisciplinary medication management leading to optimal patient outcomes. Emphasis is given to programs that will have a major impact on advancing pharmacy practice in hospitals and health systems, thereby improving public health.

ABOUT ASHP

For more than 60 years, ASHP has helped pharmacists who practice in hospitals and health systems improve medication use and enhance patient safety. The Society's 30,000 members include pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who practice in inpatient, outpatient, home-care, and long-term-care settings, as well as pharmacy students. For more information about the wide array of ASHP activities and the many ways in which pharmacists help people make the best use of medicines, visit ASHP's Web site, www.ashp.org, or its consumer Web site, www.SafeMedication.com.