

Best Practices for Graduating Pharmacists and New Practitioners Entering into a Managed Care Career

Whether you're a current pharmacy student exploring options for your future, approaching your graduation as an up and coming pharmacist, or have already started your pharmacy career and searching for a path into managed care, AMCP supports you in finding the perfect fit for your career goals. Below are tips and best practices in preparing for the application process and setting yourself apart!

Plan A may not always work out - Creating a Plan B is Essential

Perhaps you didn't match for a residency or fellowship, a job interview didn't go well, or the role you have now isn't what you thought it would be. Here are some next steps to consider:

- Engage your contacts (AMCP diplomats, pharmacy school faculty, mentors working in managed care, AMCP Conference Buddy); leverage their existing networks
- How you follow up with a contact is important; be clear in what your ask is and how they can support you
- Research managed care organizations in your area. Identify points of contact and gauge potential for shadowing opportunities or scheduling time with managed care pharmacists
- Familiarize yourself with key players in managed care (PBMs, health plans, manufacturers, etc.) and how pharmacist roles differ between organizations
- Ensure your understanding of relevant concepts and terminology; think at a higher level and convert mindset to managed care thought processes (examples below)
- Utilize resources like AMCP to stay informed on current pharmacy issues/trends and continue to expand your professional network; seek out local and national opportunities to do so

Preparing for an Interview and Setting Yourself Up for Success

- Create or update your LinkedIn profile.
 - Fill out every section in your profile. Completeness is important and increases visibility
 - Choose a clear, friendly, and professional photo
 - Ensure your experience section highlights your accomplishments (what you did, how well you did it, who it impacted)
- Participate in mock interviews and seek feedback on ways to improve how you answer questions, nonverbal communication, etc.
- Make your passion clear! Show your enthusiasm at all stages of the interview process, from initial conversations with recruiters to thoughtful handwritten (emailed when appropriate) thank you notes

- If the role requires a cover letter with the application, articulate why YOU are right for the role, instead of reiterating your CV and praising the company
- Highlight any managed care experience in your CV (shadowing, posters/publications, rotations or projects within rotations like P&T, drug monographs, journal clubs, MTM experience)
- Even if you do not have significant managed care experience, be strategic in applying what you do have directly to job descriptions, frame examples to align with managed care concepts

HOW CAN I APPLY MY CLINICAL EXPERIENCE TO MANAGED CARE?

Transferable Experience, Knowledge or Skills Gained in a Clinical Setting	Applicable Opportunities in Managed Care
Research, presentations, and writing samples completed during pharmacy school or rotations	Identifying specific populations and how new policies or formulary changes will impact those populations
Struggles, pitfalls or problems with drug delivery systems and administration protocols	Recognition of and/or improvement in delivery/administration deficiencies; identification of additional indirect treatment costs
Interdisciplinary provider perceptions and perspectives of formulary weaknesses and strengths	P&T and formulary management processes and concepts employed by hospitals are very similar to their managed care counterparts and easily transferable; any additional insight into provider mindsets is unique and of added value to the team
Experience (extensive or intermittent) with and knowledge (intimate or passing) of various drugs, side effects, and safety profiles on the frontlines of healthcare and, in the case of hospitals, in the most vulnerable and costly patient population	Understanding seemingly insignificant details (packaging, formulations, dosing schedules, common misconceptions, assumptions or mistakes about placing orders, seasonal demand fluctuations, etc.) about a wide range of drugs makes you the perfect candidate to question, revamp, design, and improve utilization management policies
Leveraging broad working knowledge or best practices of claims processing systems in order to get a claim to adjudicate	Contrary to popular belief, not all pharmacists in the managed care setting have a vivid memory or retain an intimate knowledge of the commonplace practices employed in a retail pharmacy setting and insights like those need to be marketed as invaluable skills that a managed care company would be securing with your addition
Witnessing the “hoops” and “red tape” by various health plans that general practitioners and specialists must navigate in order to gain approval for specialty, expensive, new, and/or controversial medications	Experience with meeting the utilization restrictions designed by multiple health plans from the perspective of the adjudicating/dispensing/administrating professional (whether in the hospital or the community pharmacy) brings new ideas and innovation into an organization and should be celebrated
Differences between a drug’s FDA approved diagnosis and dosing schedule published in drug references and academic resources and how they are actually prescribed	Knowing how to use the most efficacious medication and protecting the safety of patients while limiting the cost of treatment is not a meaningless mantra we recite and then dismiss – it is important to anticipate how medications may potentially be (mis)used in practice and how to support revolutionary treatments while still adhering to these basic principles