

OPTA Review

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ONCOLOGY PHARMACY TECHNICIAN ASSOCIATION | MAY 2022

2022 NCODA SPRING FORUM: OPTA MEMBER HANNAH CARABIN SHARES HER FIRST TIME EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATING AT SPRING FORUM

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PANDEMIC CHALLENGES: PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JENNIFER BERNI FROM STOCKTON HEMATOLOGY ONCOLOGY RECALLS CHALLENGES WITH IV MEDICATION SHORTAGES

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Disease State & Combination Drug Therapy Overview break out session at the 2022 NCODA Spring Forum presented by Casey Eisinger, PharmD Candidate Class of 2023.

WELCOME

SPRING FORUM EXPERIENCE: NETWORKING, COLLABORATION & MAKING NEW CONNECTIONS

BY HANNAH CARABIN, CPhT

PROGRESSIVE PHARMACY CARE, VIRGINIA CANCER INSTITUTE

My name is Hannah Carabin and I work at Progressive Pharmacy Care at Virginia Cancer Institute located in Richmond, Virginia. I attended the 2022 NCODA Spring Forum for the first time this year in Atlanta, Georgia and had such a great time! I gathered so much valuable information while at the conference and felt as a pharmacy technician it was a very beneficial opportunity for me. I was able to learn more about oncology, NCODA's Center of Excellence Medical-ly Integrated Pharmacy Accreditation, new clinical trials and new oncology treatments, laws and legislation related to pharmacy and so much more. I especially enjoyed the breakaway sessions for pharmacy technicians. I was able to learn even more about prior authorizations and patient financial assistance through the technician-based sessions and gathered information to bring



Hannah Carabin

home to my pharmacy to help create better outcomes and experiences for our patients. I also found Spring Forum to be a great opportunity for networking and making connections with NCODA members across the industry, especially other oncology pharmacy technicians. Spring Forum gave me the opportunity to meet people I never would have been able to meet. This is so beneficial because now I can reach out to other oncology pharmacy technicians when I have an idea or need another brain to bounce an idea off of. Meeting other technicians allows me to brainstorm and work through problems we share. It takes collaborating with one another to get the job done and create the best solutions! All around I thought Spring Forum was informational and beneficial for me as an oncology pharmacy technician and I look forward to attending future Spring Forums and Fall Summits with NCODA!

OPTAReview

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Monthly Webinars NCODA

Learn. Grow. Connect.

OPTALeaders

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OPTA Opportunities

MEETING PRESENTATIONS

OPTA members are invited to participate in monthly meetings by providing:

- Drug Updates/New Indication and Combination Therapy Overview
- Peer Presentations
- Technician in Focus

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- NCODA International Monthly Webinar
- NCODA Conferences/Meetings

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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OPTA Resources

NCODA DISCUSSION BOARD

<https://www.ncoda.org/discussion/pharm-tech/>

BASECAMP DOCUMENT STORAGE

<https://3.basecamp.com/3780922/reports/progress>

NCODA/OPTA WEBSITE

<https://www.ncoda.org/oncology-pharmacy-technician-association-opta/>

NEXT OPTA MEETING:

3 p.m. EST, Wednesday,
June 15th

Members will receive
a calendar invitation

TECHNICIAN IN FOCUS

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION SPECIALIST: PROBLEM SOLVING TO HELP PATIENTS ACCESS THEIR MEDICATION

Name: Caitlyn Boltik, CPhT

Practice: River Pavillion Specialty Pharmacy

How can OPTA or NCODA help you and your practice? It is a tremendous resource to have a network of oncology pharmacy technicians and healthcare professionals that work in this field. So far, I have used the Oral Chemotherapy Education (OCE) Sheets, and the Financial Assistance Tool resources.

Explain your current role at your practice:

As a prior authorization specialist, I work with the provider offices to get medications approved through insurance. Once approved, we will assist with any financial barriers by applying for foundation funding, if available, or applying for free drug through the manufacturer.

What do you enjoy most about your current position?

In oncology, the medications and therapies are always evolving and changing and this allows me to learn something new almost daily. I also enjoy helping patients directly. I previously worked in inpatient pharmacy with little to no patient interaction. I enjoy working with my patients to get assistance for their copays and being able to tell them that they were approved. I also love the problem-solving aspect of my job.

What do your day-to-day responsibilities include? My day-to-day responsibilities include:

- Completing prior authorizations and follow ups
- Applying for patient assistance and completing funding applications
- EMR documentation
- Shipping medications
- Calling patients for refills
- Assessing patients for any changes in care plans
- Troubleshooting insurance barriers for patients

Do you assume any specialized duties/responsibilities from time-to-time? All the specialty technicians complete prior authorizations, copay assistance, follow ups, and documentation daily. We rotate the following schedule weekly:

- Refill reports- generate reports for refills due for the week, call patients and document when each one gets filled into a shared report
- Daily audit- document each refill over the past 24 hours, follow up with patients and schedule shipments as needed
- Shipping- print labels and are primarily responsible for packing orders and tracking deliveries



Caitlyn Boltik

Do you have any "best-practices" that you use at your practice that you would like to share with OPTA members? We have a "tracker" in EPIC that we use for documentation. There is a place for progress notes during the prior authorization or patient assistance process. This allows for our team to cover each other if needed, as well as communicate with the doctor's office staff, since they have ability to view this information as well.

The tracker also contains a table documenting prescription number, filled date and time, PA approval and expiration, foundation or copay card information, time PA

took to complete, and the date the medication was shipped or picked up by the patient. We continue to document the refills, new prescription numbers, and fill dates and times in this same table. We use this data to keep track of our turnaround times and fill volumes, which are needed for accreditation and promoting our services.

Are there any areas where you/your pharmacy can improve (i.e. patient education, improved process workflow, etc.)?

We are working on eliminating white bagging within our health system and creating a workflow for determining whether a medication administered in the office is covered through the medical or pharmacy benefit. Our goal is to determine how best to obtain the medication without going through an outside pharmacy to ensure patient safety and medication integrity. Some insurance companies require medications be filled through their network specialty pharmacy, but new legislation in our state (Virginia) makes this practice no longer acceptable. We are working hard to fill these medications through the medical benefit or obtain overrides to fill at our internal specialty pharmacy. This is an ongoing discussion between our administrative team and medical offices to develop a workflow and system wide process that complies with this new legislation but does not delay patient care.

Legislation:

White Bagging/ Alternate Delivery of Prescriptions 18 VAC 110-20-275

What advice do you have for technicians who are new to oncology/hematology field? I am also new to this field; I have only been in my current role for about 9 months. My pharmacist taught me that when completing oncology prior authorizations, it is helpful to pull up the package insert and find the labeled indications for the medication. This gives you a starting point to then search the chart for mutations, labs, or diagnoses that will be needed to complete the prior authorization.

OVERCOMING PANDEMIC CHALLENGES: ENDURING OBSTACLES FOR PATIENTS ON IV MEDICATIONS

BY JENNIFER BERNI, CPhT

STOCKTON HEMATOLOGY ONCOLOGY

My name is Jennifer Berni. I became a pharmacy technician in 2013, and I have worked in mixing and compounding intravenous solutions for the past five years. Working in oncology during the heart of the pandemic had challenges I never saw coming. When NCODA reached out to me to write an article, I knew exactly what to write about. Writing an article about the struggles my workplace endured during the pandemic was easy, but the actual reality of facing these challenges was anything but.

One of Stockton Hematology Oncology's (SHOMG) common regimens for chemotherapy treating breast cancer includes the drug KANJINTI®. KANJINTI® is a biosimilar product to the drug,

HERCEPTIN®. Many severe issues arose as a result of the pandemic and shortages of supplies was one of them.

KANJINTI® is a multi-use vial and requires bacteriostatic water to reconstitute. When using bacteriostatic water, the remaining unused drug in the vial is reusable for up to 28 days. Unfortunately, bacteriostatic water was one of the supplies that went on backorder for quite some time.

When SHOMG noticed this issue, we reached out to the manufacturer asking if we could use normal saline instead. Their answer was no, but we could use sterile water. The issue we faced with using sterile water to reconstitute this drug was that the stability would go from 28 days to

24 hours. This was a big difference. For the next couple of months, SHOMG brainstormed on how to preserve our supply of bacteriostatic water, what resources we might use to get more, and so on. It was a constant challenge, especially for our small practice.

I am sure SHOMG was not the only practice affected by shortages or even other challenges the pandemic stirred up among the healthcare field. It is always important to talk about these problems as healthcare workers so we can share our solutions and hopefully, one day see an ending to this pandemic. Until the next challenge, that is.



Jennifer Berni



NOW STREAMING ——— *Season 2 - Episode 19*
Oncology Pharmacy Technicians

THE PQ PODCAST

Rebecca Garland, RPhT

Vonda McClendon, CPhT

Listen on Apple Podcasts Spotify NCODA.org

EDITOR'S REFLECTIONS

2022 NCODA SPRING FORUM: EXCELLENCE IN ALIGNMENT WITH NCODA'S MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

BY JANINE BRODEUR, CPhT

CANCER CARE ASSOCIATES FOR RESEARCH & EXCELLENCE

A huge thank you to NCODA for putting on such a fantastic, jam packed program! This was my second opportunity to attend an in-person session since becoming a member in 2019. This program did not disappoint. NCODA and it's staff truly emanate "Excellence" in alignment with their Mission and Vision statements.

DAY 1-The welcome reception did not disappoint! The evening was filled with good company, good food and an opportunity to get to know and meet others from oncology dispensing practices.

DAY 2-The keynote address "Putting the Care in Cancer Care, Excellence Wins" by Horst Schulz, Founder of the Ritz Carlton and author of *Excellence Wins* and cancer survivor himself wowed the audience with this passion for excellence. He showed us how excellence is not just by accident but the result of high intent. He laid out the steps to strive for excellence in leadership and in your company. He talked about creating a work environ-

ment of purpose and belonging. One of his profound statements was "Do not hire to perform a function, hire to JOIN your purpose, your mission your vision. Your mission gets you to your vision."

NCODA's Center of Excellence Medically Integrated Pharmacy Accreditation (CoE MIP) program was brought to life by Elizabeth Bell. The program is patient-centered and focuses on positive patient outcomes. We had the privilege to witness the first recipient of the CoE MIP receive their accreditation certificate. Congratulations to Minnesota Oncology!

Pharmacy technicians were able to participate in pharmacy technician specific sessions which included: Prior Authorizations and Appeals, Disease State & Combination Therapy Overviews and Trends in Financial Assistance Programs.

Nora Hansen, CPhT from Illinois Cancer Specialists shared the importance of establishing a rapport with our patients at the very first visit and how advantageous it can be for the patient.

DAY 3-The day started with a hot topic general session: "How Legislation Impacts Oncology: Identifying Disparities in the PBM System". The panel of experts helped us to identify discrepancies in the PBM system and how it is impacting MIDs and patients access to oral oncolytics in a timely manner. MIDs and oncology clinics need to speak up and share why diversity in medically integrated dispensaries can benefit the patients. Prime Therapeutics has recently opened up their networks so that physicians and pharmacists can keep their prescriptions in office. In fact the current director of Prime Therapeutics is an Oncologist. They are working on contacting plans directly and educating plans on the huge value in MIDs. NCODA's new accreditation program is the preferred new accreditation program with Prime Therapeutics.

NCODA is truly the leader in Excellence as they continue to raise the bar in helping us, help our patients!

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NCODA FALL SUMMIT



October 27-29, 2022 | Orlando, FL

OPTA MEET & GREET

