



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**

BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY  
2300 E STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20372-5300

IN REPLY REFER TO

6710  
Ser M3/5HCS 10UM352302  
31 Mar 10

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE EAST  
COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE WEST  
COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA  
COMMANDER, NAVY MEDICINE SUPPORT COMMAND

Subj: NAVY PHARMACY ASSESSMENT OF BARRIERS TO LEARNING POLICY

Ref: (a) The Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Program Standard PC.02.03.01

1. The Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Program standard PC.02.03.01, reference (a), requires hospitals to provide patient education and training based on patients needs and abilities to include; patient cultural and religious beliefs, emotional barriers, desire and motivation to learn, physical or cognitive limitation, and barriers to communication.

2. Patient counseling of prescription medication by a pharmacist is a core and mandatory component of patient care; instructions must be clearly understood by the patient. This policy establishes minimum requirements for pharmacists to ensure assessment of patient learning needs, and address deficiencies if identified.

3. Pharmacists will use at least one of the below techniques to determine any barriers to learning.

a. Use open-ended questions, such as, "How will you take your medication?," or "What questions do you have for the Pharmacist?" A patient's inability to understand the question or explain how they would take their medication is an indication of a language barrier.

b. Request the patient explain how they would take their medication.

c. Ask the patient to read back the directions according to the label to assess for a visual or hearing barrier.

d. Assess if the patient comprehends instructions by using the "teach back" approach. For example, ask the patient to show you how to use the inhaler.

e. If a barrier is noted, use at least one of the following methods appropriate to the learning barrier identified to ensure patient comprehension.

(1) Counsel the patient in a private area. Use open-ended questions along with additional counseling when necessary.

(2) If there is a language barrier, the patient and the pharmacist will use interpretation services available through the local command.

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(3) Provide medication counseling and instructions to a patient care giver, with the patient present if possible.

(4) Printed materials are available through Lexi-Comp in Spanish and in large print to assist in language or vision barriers.

f. Information on patient barriers to learning may be found in the patient's AHLTA profile if the pharmacist identifies the need for further assessment.

g. Education on patient barriers to learning will be conducted and documented annually for the pharmacy staff and documented in the individual's training record. A Power Point training presentation is located on the Navy Pharmacy webpage of Navy Knowledge Online.

4. Point of contact for questions regarding Pharmacy Assessment of Barriers to Learning is CAPT Stephanie Simon who may be reached at (202) 762-3004 or Stephanie.Simon@med.navy.mil.

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