Rough Waters to Smooth Sailing: Charting Clinical Excellence in the Waves of Standards of Care

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Disclosures and Conflict of Interest

- Speakers' Bureau, Abbott Diabetes Care

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Disclosure of AI Use

Use of AI

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become prominent in the world of education. If you utilize AI in the development of educational content for a CE activity, you should disclose the following to learners during your presentation:

Google Gemini.

- Creation of graphics and tables
- Gemini 3.5 flash and Gemini 3.1 Pro
- July 7, 2026

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Pharmacist Objectives

At the conclusion of this program, the pharmacist will be able to:

1. Formulate core Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for clinical pharmacy services
2. Develop standardized and structured clinical documentation
3. Create concise, bi-directional communication between pharmacy and primary care providers

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Technician Objectives

At the conclusion of this program, the pharmacy technician will be able to:

1. Formulate core Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for clinical pharmacy services for pharmacy technicians
2. Illustrate how accurate technician-driven data capture directly impacts downstream clinical documentation
3. Apply standard communication protocols to handle routine, bidirectional correspondence with healthcare providers regarding clinical pharmacy services

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What determines the pharmacist ability to provide a service under the Standard of Care Regulatory Model?

1. Education
2. Training
3. Experience
4. All of the above

Pre-Test Question #1

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True or False:

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are a companion to the policy and procedure manual.

Pre-Test Question #2

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The SOAP note is the accepted form of standardized documentation. What does the "O" in SOAP stand for and where does that information come from?

1. Objective and provided by the patient
2. Observation and measured by a healthcare professional
3. Objective and measured by a healthcare professional
4. Observation and provided by the patient

Pre-Test Question #3

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What is the most literature cited improvement when implementing standardized communication between providers regarding patients?

1. Improves information exchange
2. Allows for quicker transition of care
3. Improves provider relationships
4. Improves patient safety

Pre-Test Question #4

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1. Standard of Care
2. Standardized Operating Procedures (SOPs)
3. Documentation
4. Communication

Voyage Itinerary

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Standard of Care Regulatory Framework

Bright Line

Standard of Care

1. Joint Commission of Pharmacy Practitioners. *Pharmacists' Patient Care Process*. Published May 20, 2025.
2. Vanderpool D. The standard of care. *Innov Clin Neurosci*. 2021;18(7-9):50-51.
3. Carstens. Creating standard operating procedures (SOPs) for healthcare. Carstens website. https://carstens.com/blogs/latest/creating-standard-operating-procedures-sops-for-healthcare. Accessed July 14, 2026.
4. Frost T, Wolfson J. *Toward pharmacist full practice authority*. Cicero Institute. Published November 6, 2024. https://ciceroinstitute.org/research/toward-pharmacist-full-practice-authority. Accessed July 19, 2025.

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Workshop Activity

- Choose Your Own Adventure
  - Clinical Service
  - Develop SOPs
  - Develop Standardized Documentation
  - Develop an editable script for communication with a provider

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Building the Hull: Designing Structural Workflows

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

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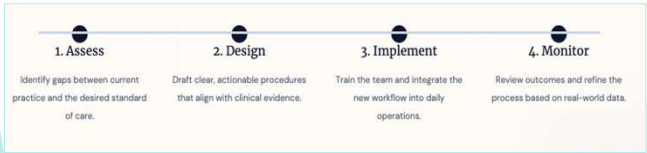
SOP Development Framework

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are your INTERNAL regulations.
- Demonstrates that there is an established CONSISTENT, SAFE, and EFFECTIVE process being utilized.



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Assessment

- Identify Operational Risks
  - Are current practices consistent across all staff?
  - Does the current workflow align with the latest clinical guidelines?
  - Where have the “errors” or ”near misses” occurred most recently?
  - Are there new regulatory authorities (e.g., test-and-treat) we aren’t utilizing?

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Design: Drafting Effective SOPs

Core Components

Purpose: Why are we doing this?
Scope: Who does this apply to?
Procedure: Step-by-step instructions.
Responsibility: Who is accountable?

Writing Principles

SOPs must be usable documents, not dusty binders. Use active voice ("Technician collects sample") rather than passive. Keep steps concise. Use flowcharts for complex decision trees.

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Training and Implementation

- DOCUMENTATION is KEY!
- Implementation should be structured…
  - Read and Sign: All staff must attest to reading the new SOP
  - Live Training: Role-play the new workflow
  - Competency Assessment: Verify skills, use of SOP
  - Accessibility: SOPs should be available to everyone at the point-of-care

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Monitoring

- Create a measurable way to monitor the SOP
  - CQI leads to reduction in operational errors and variances

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):

An ongoing, systematic approach to improving processes and outcomes
Uses data to identify gaps, test changes, and measure impact
Emphasizes continuous refinement rather than one-time fixes

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Summary of SOPs

- LEGAL PROTECTION
  - In the event of an audit or lawsuit, your SOPs serve as evidence that you acted as a reasonable and prudent practitioner, adhering to established standards.
- OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY
  - Standardization removes ambiguity.
  - Staff spend less time guessing "how" to do a task.
  - More time spent:
    - Delivering patient care,
    - Reducing burnout and employee turnover.

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WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

Create an SOP for a service that you provide or would like to start in your practice.

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The Captain's Log: Standardizing the Chart

Standardized Documentation (SOAP notes)

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The "Why"

- Patient Safety
- Continuity of Care
- Legal Protection
  - Audits
- Reimbursement and Revenue
  - Coverage parity
  - Payment parity
- Quality and Regulatory Compliance
  - JCAHO
- Research and Public Health

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The Golden Rule

- "If it wasn't documented, it didn't happen!"
- "Trust me. I'm a Pharmacist."
- These statements are not defensible in an audit
- Dangers and Pitfalls of unstructured, narrative-free text notes
  - Omission of key negatives
  - Unreadable or unorganized flow

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Standardized Documentation

- Supports current evidence-based, clinical practice guidelines
  - Include drop downs
  - Check boxes that can be clicked
  - Program to pull in information from Prescription Management System or Electronic Health Record
- Structured notes
  - Longer
  - Clear
  - Concise
- Allows for quality improvement

1. Narayanan, J., Dobrin, S., Choi, J., Rubin, S., Pham, A., Patel, V., Frigerio, R., Maurer, D., Gupta, P., Link, L., Walters, S., Wang, C., Ji, Y. and Maraganore, D.M. (2017), Structured clinical documentation in the electronic medical record to improve quality and to support practice-based research in epilepsy. Epilepsia, 58: 68-76. https://doi.org/10.1111/epi.13607
2. Ebbers T, Kool RB, Smeele LE, Dirven R, den Besten CA, Karssemakers LHE, Verhoeven T, Herruer JM, van den Broek GB, Takes RP. The Impact of Structured and Standardized Documentation on Documentation Quality; a Multicenter, Retrospective Study. J Med Syst. 2022 May 27;46(7):46. doi: 10.1007/s10916-022-01837-9.

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SOAP Notes

- Subjective
- Objective
- Assessment
- Plan

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Considerations for Documentation

- Use person-first language
- Refer to your patients according to their self-identification
- Avoid unapproved abbreviations and/or acronyms
- Say what you write and write what you say
- Verify past history information prior to documenting
- Review any social determinants of health (ie. Health literacy, financial barriers, etc)
- Avoid words that convey bias or judgment
- Keep descriptions of physical examinations objective
- EMPOWER patients with encouraging words and clear next steps
- Pay close attention to sensitive topics (ie. Substance use history, mental health, etc)
- Write from your perspective

Adapted from: Vanka A, Johnston KT, Delbanco T, DesRoches CM, Garcia A, Salmi L, Blease C
Guidelines for Patient-Centered Documentation in the Era of Open Notes: Qualitative Study JMIR Med Educ 2025;11:e59301 doi: 10.2196/59301

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WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

Create a template SOAP note for a service that you provide or would like to start in your practice.

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Broadcasting the Signal: Bi-Directional Communication Using SBAR

Bi-Directional Communication: Best Practices

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Standardized Communication

- US Navy introduced the SBAR framework in 1940; adapted by Kaiser Permanente in 2002 for healthcare use
  - Supported by Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)
  - Supported by AHRQ via the TeamSTEPPS program
- Delivers actionable information
  - What does a busy healthcare professional need to know?
  - Improves patient safety
  - Improves information exchange
  - Improves quality of care
- Concise communication

1. Beckett, C.D. and Kipnis, G. (2009), Collaborative Communication: Integrating SBAR to Improve Quality/Patient Safety Outcomes. Journal for Healthcare Quality, 31: 19-28. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1945-1474.2009.00043.x
2. Bonds RL. SBAR Tool Implementation to Advance Communication, Teamwork, and the Perception of Patient Safety Culture. *Creative Nursing*. 2018;24(2):116-123. doi:10.1891/1078-4535.24.2.116
3. Kostoff M, Burkhardt C, Winter A, Shrader S. An Interprofessional Simulation Using the SBAR Communication Tool. AJPE 2016; 80 (9) Article 157. https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe809157

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SBAR Communication

- Situation
- Background
- Assessment
- Recommendation

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WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

Create an SBAR communication for a service that you provide or would like to start in your practice.

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Final tips & Take Home Points

Standard of Care

Utilize your education, training and experience to share your passion with your community

Standardized Operating Procedures

Create workflows that make sense and allow you to continue growing your services

SOAP Notes

Creating a template that can be reused for the same service- saves time and creates consistency

SBAR Communication

Utilize the same communication tool as other healthcare professionals to provide clear, concise messaging for improved patient safety and quality of care

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Resources and References

- Institute for Healthcare Improvement SBAR Tool (free download)
  - https://www.ihi.org/library/tools/sbar-tool-situation-background-assessment-recommendation
- American College of Clinical Pharmacy Tips for SOAP notes
  - https://www.accp.com/stunet/newsletter.aspx?art=145
- Pharmacy Practice Standards Institute (new resource for Standard of Care)
  - https://www.rxstandards.com/

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Questions???

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Thank you

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