

# Why Does Your Hospital Need a Certified Geriatric Pharmacist?

**1. *Changing Medicare reimbursement rules are creating financial incentives to focus on geriatric care principles.***

Medicare has introduced financial penalties to hospitals with excessive numbers of readmissions of Medicare patients within 30 days of discharge. Medicare is also stopping payment for certain “never events” such as falls in the elderly and hospital-acquired infections. Pharmacists with geriatric expertise are trained to focus on the total patient, including issues such as medication reconciliation and geriatric syndromes (e.g. falls).

**2. *Adults aged 65 and over account for an increasing proportion of all inpatient hospital days.***

Medicare paid for the majority of adult non-maternal hospital stays in 2012, and this proportion is increasing as the baby boomers continue to age. Hospitals need to plan and prepare for the aging of hospital patients. The team approach mentioned below is one example of this. Hospital pharmacy departments should be prepared to work with hospital executives to adopt strategies to accommodate the growing numbers of elderly patients.

**3. *Hospitals are increasingly adopting the team approach to care of elderly patients and need pharmacists with geriatric expertise to participate on these geriatric teams.***

An increasing number of hospitals are adopting a formal interprofessional team approach to caring for older adult hospital inpatients. ACE (Acute Care of the Elderly) units, NICHE (Nurses Improving Care for Health-System Elders), and HELP (Hospital Elder Life Program) are examples of these approaches.

In many hospitals, the Certified Geriatric Pharmacist participates in these teams. The need for geriatric pharmacists will grow as the number of these teams grows in the future.

**4. *A hospital with one or more Certified Geriatric Pharmacists demonstrates understanding of the need for expertise in medication use in older adults, and a commitment to improving care for older adult patients.***

Whether as part of a compliance strategy (e.g. Joint Commission) or in marketing, a hospital with pharmacists credentialed in geriatrics is demonstrating a commitment to provide safe and effective care to an important segment of the patient population.