

January 9, 2012

The Honorable Tom Sloan
Chairman, Vision 2020 Committee
Capitol Building, Room 55-S
Topeka, Kansas 66612

RE: Report on Remote Supervision in Pharmacy

Dear Representative Sloan:

The Kansas State Board of Pharmacy (the "Board") is providing this update on the use of telepharmacy and remote supervision of pharmacy technicians.

The Board promulgated regulations at the September 2011 Board meeting related to the use of video conferencing technology for hospital pharmacies. A licensed Kansas pharmacist at a central location may supervise a registered pharmacy technician or student at a remote Kansas hospital pharmacy communicating face-to-face in real time through audio and video computer links. This will permit rural or underserved citizens to have their hospital pharmacy services restored or retained to the same level as those hospitals with an in-house pharmacist. This process assures the delivery of safe high quality pharmacy services that can be at risk when the pharmacist is left out of the equation.

The Board also issued a Guidance Paper to provide additional information related to the regulations. The Guidance Paper makes it clear that the pharmacist-in-charge of the medical care facility that wishes to use remote supervision must fill out an application with the Board of Pharmacy prior to using the electronic supervision. The Board will issue a permit to the remote location. The Kansas licensed pharmacist that is supervising a technician or pharmacy student remotely can be employed by the medical care facility or have a contractual relationship with the hospital. The licensed pharmacist may

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supervise only one individual at the remote hospital site. The individual under supervision may be either a pharmacy technician that has been registered with the Board or a pharmacy student currently enrolled in an accredited pharmacy school and who has been registered with the Kansas Board of Pharmacy as an Intern. The pharmacy technician or the pharmacy student does not have to be designated for an entire shift and the pharmacy technician or student may be changed during the course of a day. There may only be one pharmacy technician or student working in the remote hospital site at a time.

The licensed Kansas pharmacist may supervise more than one pharmacy technician remotely at different hospitals but they may only review the work on one pharmacy student or pharmacy technician at one time. This means that the supervising pharmacist may not use a split screen to review the work of more than one pharmacy technician or student at a time.

The supervising pharmacist may review a cart fill run from a list of medication generated by an automated dispensing cabinet or from the patient's medication administration (MAR). The pharmacy technician or student may refill automated dispensing machines under electronic supervision.

Via Christi Health epharmacy is the first pharmacy registered to review a rural hospital remotely. Director Mark Gagnon, PharmD used teleconferencing in November 2011 at Hiawatha Community Hospital. They were able to beta test their system live with the hospital's pharmacy technician and Hiawatha had coverage while their pharmacist was gone over the Thanksgiving holiday. Jean Abeita, is the director of pharmacy for Hiawatha Community Hospital.

The image quality was very good, however when Via Christi went to capture it, it blurred a little. They believe it was a document camera issue and are working to resolve that problem. I have attached a copy of Dr. Gagnon and the pharmacy technician along with the medication screen shot.

Using a remote camera, Gagnon reviewed the pharmacy technician as she moved through the pharmacy and, if the medication needed to be checked, she set it beneath a camera so that Gagnon could verify the

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medication via video. Without this pharmacist review, nurses can only secure single doses of medication at a time from a pharmacy. With the pharmacist's supervision, pharmacy technicians are allowed to take out multiple medications to refill automatic dispensing machines to help serve the patients throughout the day. The technician emailed the refill list to Gagnon and the camera was focused on the meds and not the med and fill list. This worked very well on both ends.

The Board has been contacted by some other rural hospitals in Kansas that would like to use this technology. The Board will review each application and make a determination that the video and audio quality is sufficient to ensure safety of the patient. The Board will also review the pharmacy technician training and the policy and procedure manuals. I have attached a copy of a portion of the Via Christi Electronic Supervision Training information.

The Board has continued to work on regulations for electronic supervision of a pharmacy technician in a retail pharmacy setting. The last draft was approved by the Department of Administration and the Attorney General's Office. However, the Joint Committee on Rules and Regulations expressed concerns regarding pharmacy technician training. The Board did not vote on the regulations and chose to review them again. The Board has added additional language that they hope will satisfy any safety concerns that were expressed. The draft has been stamped by the Department of Administration and was sent to the Attorney General's Office for review. A copy of the draft is attached.

If I can provide further information or if there are any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Debra L. Billingsley
Executive Secretary

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