

## **ICHP Position Statement - Support for a Just Culture and Medication Error Reporting**

The Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists (ICHP) supports pharmacists as leaders in establishing a just culture in their workplaces and a non-punitive approach to addressing medication errors while promoting a non-threatening environment to encourage pharmacy staff and others to report actual and potential medication errors in a timely manner.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are key participants in the identification, prevention, and management of medication errors. Pharmacists, in conjunction with other health care professionals, must continually collect data on and evaluate the medication use process as part of an ongoing quality improvement program in order to minimize the risk of medication errors. ICHP is committed to improving the quality of patient care and recognizes the identification of medication errors and near misses as an opportunity for improvement.

ICHP supports the concept that errors occur due to a breakdown in systems and processes. A just culture recognizes that individual practitioners should not be held accountable for system failings over which they have no control, and that many of these represent predictable interactions between human operators and the systems in which they work. However, a just culture does not tolerate conscious disregard of clear risks to patients or gross misconduct.<sup>2</sup>

Establishment of a just culture includes supporting staff involved with an adverse outcome and recognizing that:

- Human error is not 100% avoidable.
- An open transparent culture is essential for improvement.
- An emphasis on system opportunities rather than individual fault fosters voluntary reporting.

The evaluation of medication use systems must employ continuous quality improvement techniques in conjunction with a fully utilized, non-punitive reporting mechanism and concurrent pharmacist intervention in the prescribing, dispensing, administering and monitoring of medications. At a minimum, this includes appropriate review of medication orders by a pharmacist, ensuring that pharmacists are fully involved in drug treatment plans, and pharmacist participation in nationally established medication error reporting programs. Further, ICHP encourages the use of automation such as robotics, other

automated dispensing technology, bar code scanning and computer technology for the purpose of alerting the pharmacist and other health care practitioners to prevent and/or minimize patient harm.

Definitions:

Medication error: Any preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate medication use or patient harm while the medication is in the control of the health care professional, patient, or consumer. Such events may be related to professional practice, health care products, procedures, and systems, including prescribing, order communication, product labeling, packaging and nomenclature, compounding, dispensing, distribution, administration, education, monitoring and use.<sup>1</sup>

1. National Coordinating Council for Medication Error Reporting and Prevention (NCCMERP). [Medication Error Definition \(nccmerp.org\)](https://www.nccmerp.org/medication-error-definition) (last accessed 10/20/2023)
2. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP Policy Positions 2009-2018 (with rationales): Medication Safety. Number 1021 Just Culture and Reporting Medication Errors. [Policy Positions of ASHP](https://www.ashp.org/policy-positions) (last accessed 10/20/2023)
3. American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. ASHP Statement on Reporting Medical Errors. 2000. <https://www.ashp.org/-/media/assets/policy-guidelines/docs/statements/reporting-medical-errors.ashx> (last accessed 10/20/2023)

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