

## Streamlining Pharmacy Services: The Impact of Decentralized Pharmacy Technicians

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### Background

The Smilow Pharmacy Department main campus at Yale New Haven Health prepares approximately 230 infusions daily across various specialties, including medonc clinic (40%), hematology clinic (30%), and other non-oncology areas (30%). Historically, oncology pharmacists manage both clinical and operational tasks, often resulting in significant treatment delays due to high workloads.

To improve workflow efficiency and reduce delays, Smilow leadership introduced the role of a Decentralized Pharmacy Technician (DT) to our medonc clinic. The DT is tasked with handling prior authorization reviews, the liaison between nursing and pharmacy, medication delivery, and managing pyxis medication requests and maintenance. The DT role also took over most of the communication with the financial clearance team. This role alleviates some responsibilities from clinical pharmacists, allowing them to focus more on direct patient care and optimizing clinical decisions for cancer patients.

### Objectives

This initiative aims to establish the role of the DT in supporting oncology pharmacists by reducing non-clinical workload, improving patient care and fostering opportunities for technician advancement.

#### Primary endpoint

Average number of prior authorization reviews completed by DT per day.

#### Secondary endpoints

- Number of phone calls to pharmacists per month.
- Average time from dose preparation to delivery.
- Number of patients counseled by pharmacists.
- Number of patients sent home without treatment each month.
- Average number of dose requests to DT by nursing staff per day.

### Methods

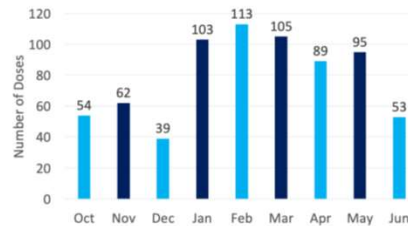
- Single-center, prospective chart review conducted at Smilow Cancer Hospital main campus. Data collection period: July 2023 to June 2024.
- Data was collected by comparing various metrics from two distinct periods: July 2023 to September 2023, when there was no decentralized technician, and October 2023 to June 2024, when a decentralized technician was actively working on the unit.
- Metrics were collected by DT with the utilization of Epic, Epic Rover and Dose Edge IV workflow platforms.
- Data analyzed and presented as means and counts.

### Results

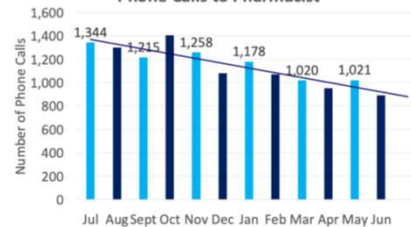
Enhancing Efficiency: Average Daily Prior Authorizations by DT



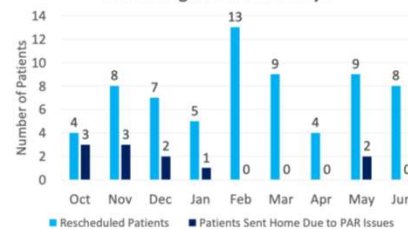
Enhancing Workflow: DT as the Primary Contact for Nurse Escalations



Streamlining Communication: Fewer Phone Calls to Pharmacist



Proactive Patient Rescheduling: Preventing Treatment Delays



Reducing Treatment Delays: Improved Dose Delivery Time



More Time for Patients: Increase in Pharmacist Patient Counseling



### Discussion

- The DT handles 80-100 prior authorization reviews daily, reducing pharmacist workload and supporting the cancer care team. Previously completed by pharmacists two days in advance, the technician now reviews up to seven days ahead, catching and resolving more issues before patient appointments.
- A low number of patients sent home due to unresolved prior authorization reviews indicates effective management of treatment timelines.
- The steady increase in dose requests by nursing staff demonstrates a successful shift in responsibilities from pharmacists to DT highlighting the positive impact of the DT role.
- The average dose delivery time of 18 minutes represents a 32% improvement, reflecting greater efficiency and reduced wait times for patients.
- The addition of the DT to the medonc unit led to a 21% decrease in phone calls directed to pharmacist, allowing them to focus more on direct patient care services.
- The implementation of the DT role has significantly increased the time available for pharmacist to focus on clinical responsibilities and patient care. As a result, patient counseling sessions approved by 75% since the DT role was introduced.
- Surveys conducted at the end of Q1 and Q3 revealed that pharmacists and nurses noticed a significant positive impact from having DT on the unit. Their feedback highlights the difference this role has made in improving workflow and patient care.

### Conclusions

- The DT role continues to evolve at Yale New Haven Health Smilow Pharmacy Department, enhancing employee satisfaction and higher-quality patient care.
- The DT enables pharmacists to focus more on direct patient care activities.
- Establishing the DT role fosters strong collaboration between various Smilow departments, enhancing overall patient care.
- The DT role provides career advancement opportunities and increased responsibilities for pharmacy technicians.
- Improved communication between departments streamlines patient care services, reducing risk-level events and promoting patient safety.

### Future Directions

- Identify additional task that can be delegated to the DT role.
- Obtain additional FTEs to expand DT role to other areas within Smilow Cancer Hospital and our surrounding community clinics.

### Disclosures

All data and sources used in this project and presentation was obtained from internal records within Yale New Haven.