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# Working most Effectively with the Hospital Pharmacy

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**Introduction:** The process from when a psychiatrist orders medication in an Electronic Health Record (EHR) to when it arrives at the nursing station is complex and involves multiple steps. Understanding this process, including medication reconciliation, can help you ensure more efficient care and minimize delays in medication administration.

## The Medication Order Process

1. **Order Entry:** Once you order a medication through the EHR, the order is electronically transmitted to the pharmacy. This system reduces errors related to handwriting and immediately alerts pharmacists to new orders.
2. **Pharmacist Review:** The pharmacist receives the order and reviews it for any potential issues, such as drug interactions, allergies, or dosing errors.
3. **Medication Preparation:** After approval, the pharmacy staff prepares the medication. This might involve measuring the correct dose, compounding drugs if necessary, and labeling the medication.
4. **Dispensing:** The prepared medication is then dispensed, typically into a secure cart that is transported to the nursing station. Controlled substances often require additional verification steps.

## Medication Reconciliation Explained

Medication reconciliation is a safety process in which healthcare providers compare a patient's medication orders to all the medications that the patient has been taking. This is to avoid medication errors such as omissions, duplications, dosing errors, or drug interactions. Pharmacists play a key role in this process by:

- Verifying the accuracy of medication lists at admission, transfer, and discharge.
- Ensuring that any changes in medication are intentional and documented.
- Consulting with psychiatrists and nurses to clarify any discrepancies.

## Common Delays and How to Mitigate Them

Delays in getting medications to the nursing station can be caused by:

- The need for thorough review and preparation, especially for high-risk medications.
- The physical distance between the pharmacy and patient care areas.
- Waiting for approval of controlled substances.
- Limited pharmacy staffing, particularly during off-hours.

## Strategies to make the medication process as seamless as possible:

- Enter orders into the EHR as early as possible, especially for medications known to require extra processing time.
- Be available to quickly respond to pharmacists' queries regarding orders.
- Participate in medication reconciliation processes by providing accurate and complete medication histories.
- Educate yourself on formulary options and choose first-line medications that are readily available in the hospital pharmacy.
- Communicate directly with pharmacists when prescribing complex or unusual medication regimens.