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The power of pharmacists in reducing readmissions

January 17, 2013 | By [Alicia Caramenico](#)

With [big Medicare penalties for high readmission rates](#), hospitals are focusing on medication reconciliation and adherence to keep patients from bouncing back to their facilities.



"Many institutions are trying their best to come up with methods to meet the requirements, and pharmacists are an integral part of the solution," Robert Lee Page II, a physical medicine clinical specialist in the Division of Cardiology at the University of Colorado School of Pharmacy and Medicine, [told Pharmacy Practice News](#).

For example, Barnes-Jewish Hospital found that readmissions largely stem from almost half of discharged patients failing to fill their prescriptions, [St. Louis Business Journal reported](#)

So with new technology and new full-time pharmacists, the St. Louis hospital gave patients the ability to fill prescriptions at their bedside. The initiative has already seen results, with more than 2,800 patients filling 13,000 prescriptions, and approximately 40 percent of patients now leaving Barnes-Jewish with their medication, the article noted.

Meanwhile, Atlanta Medical Center saw its readmission rates drop thanks to pharmacist involvement in patient care during the hospital stay and post-discharge, [Pharmacy Practice News](#) noted.

Patients who received one-on-one medication and disease management discharge counseling from a pharmacist had a 50 percent lower 30-day readmission rate than patients without intervention.

Similarly, The Nebraska Medical Center used patient drug education and follow-up from pharmacists, nurses and nutritionists and saw readmission fall from 28 percent in 2010 to 20 percent in 2011, according to the article.

And in Minnesota, Hennepin County Medical Center said its [pharmacy medication management program has helped cut admissions by 42 percent](#), emergency room visits by 37 percent and average cost of care by \$2,500 per patient, [FierceHealthcare](#) previously reported.

For more:

- read the [St. Louis Business Journal article](#)
- here's the [Pharmacy Practice News article](#)