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## Pharmacists underutilized in health system

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When pharmacists get involved closely with patients' care, it can improve outcomes, especially if they work with the patient to manage chronic diseases. Not only that, pharmacists may help squeeze costs out of the system, as they're able to help physicians identify available drugs that can do the most cost-effective job of managing a patient's condition.

Lately, the benefits of pharmacist involvement have started to develop a higher profile. In fact, a recent series of articles appearing in mass media daily the *Los Angeles Times* highlights the benefits of pharmacist involvement in patient care.

Right now, most states have laws requiring pharmacists to give patients counseling when their regimen changes, but 50 percent of patients ages 65 or older waive such counseling, according to new research. Ideally, pharmacists go beyond such by-the-book counseling to do a complete review of all the medications a patient takes, including supplements, herbal products and OTC meds, but not all health plans cover med therapy management.

If pharmacists do get involved, however, good things happen. For example, a study being reviewed for publication suggests that diabetes-related health outcomes are much better in clinics integrating clinical pharmacists.

Get more information on this issue:

- read the *Los Angeles Times'* articles [here](#) [1], [here](#) [2] and [here](#) [3]

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