

# Evaluation of an Endocrinology Specialty Pharmacist, an Expansion of Health System-Based Specialty Pharmacy Services

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## Background

With the progression in the development of pharmaceuticals, high-cost therapies are becoming more common for the management of chronic diseases. In 2021, \$603 billion was spent on prescription drugs, and specialty drugs accounted for \$301 billion, approximately 50% of the cost.<sup>3</sup> Spending on specialty drugs increased by 43% between 2016 and 2021.<sup>3</sup> There are thousands of specialty medications in preclinical trials, and new specialty drugs are brought to the market each year.<sup>4</sup> Patients on specialty medications often have multiple chronic disease states and may be required to use multiple pharmacies to access all of their medications. Many specialty pharmacies are mail-order pharmacies, which can contribute to complications with coordination, leading to delayed therapy initiation, financial burden to the patient, and increased risk of adverse drug events from lack of patient engagement and education.<sup>2</sup> Studies have shown the benefits of developing and integrating specialty pharmacy services into specialty clinics. A study conducted at the University of Utah assessed the impact of the system wide specialty pharmacy program at their academic healthcare system. The study demonstrated that with the integration of specialty pharmacy services, there was a reduction in time to therapy initiation of specialty prescriptions, increased adherence, increased health system revenue from new prescription capture, and increased access to specialty medications for patients.<sup>1</sup>

St. Peter's Health does not currently have a pharmacist integrated in the endocrinology clinic. There are numerous specialty and specialty lite endocrine medications available for use in this specialty area. As part of this project, we will integrate a specialty pharmacist in the endocrinology clinic. A large number of endocrinology patients have diabetes, so it would be reasonable to start working with this patient population. The embedded specialty pharmacist will collaborate with endocrinology providers and potentially some primary care providers for management of specialty and specialty lite medications in the endocrinology clinic.

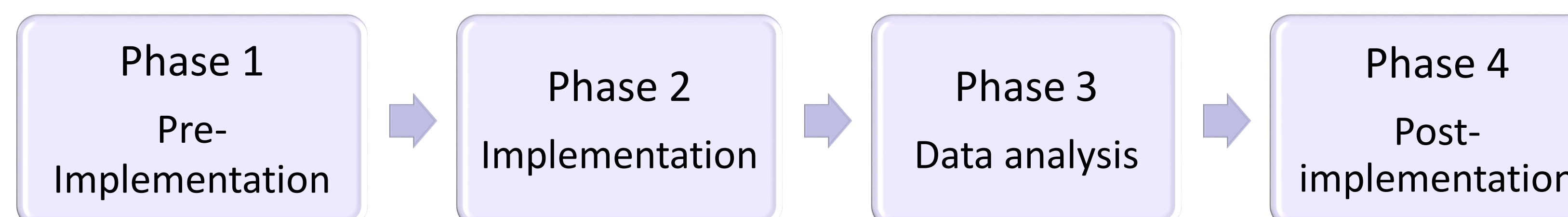
## Objectives

**Primary objective:** Evaluation of the impact of an integrated endocrinology specialty pharmacist on patient safety, medication adherence, and improvements in HbA1c (as defined as a percentage of referred patients that reach their glycemic goal, including the time it took to reach goal from referral).

### Secondary objectives:

- Patient and care team satisfaction
- Time to treatment initiation after initial prescribing
- Pharmacist interventions
- Cost savings to patients and other financial impact

## Methods



### Phase 1: Pre-Implementation

- Project planning
- Identify specialty and specialty lite medications to enroll in the specialty pharmacy program
- Determine key stakeholders for collaboration
- Develop method for data tracking

### Specialty & Specialty Lite Medications for Endocrinology

Apidra Solostar	Triptorelin	Humalog	Somatropin	Insulin Aspart	Forteo
Lantus Solostar	Levemir Flextouch	Metopirone	Victoza	Trulicity	Jardiance
		Thyrogen	Farxiga		

### Phase 2: Implementation

- Embed pharmacist in the endocrinology clinic
- Begin enrolling patients into the SPH Specialty Pharmacy Program
- Begin tracking data

### Phase 3: Data Analysis

- Data collection and review
- Develop collaborative practice agreements and/or educational tools for the team and patients as necessary

### Phase 4: Post-Implementation

- Compile data and present findings
- Write manuscript
- Pursue approval of endocrinology specialty pharmacist position

## Proposed Tasks

### Role for pharmacist

- Coordination of patient care
- Therapy monitoring
- Assessment and optimization of therapy
- Patient cost-savings assistance
- Ongoing medication monitoring
- Ordering pertinent labs
- Collaboration with referring provider and care team

### Role for providers

- Diagnosis of the disease state that requires use of specialty or specialty lite medications
- Initial treatment for disease state management
- Referral to specialty pharmacist for collaborative care

## Discussion

With the expansion of specialty pharmacy services by integrating a pharmacist into the endocrinology clinic, patients who are prescribed specialty and specialty-lite medications would have access to services to simplify their care. This will be done by an embedded specialty pharmacist providing medication optimization, refill coordination, financial assistance support, and clinical follow-ups. This proposed integration will further ensure improved patient access to medication and help patients achieve better outcomes.

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## Author Disclosures

Authors of this presentation have the following to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation: Keenan Douglas: Nothing to Disclose, Taylor Sandvick: Nothing to Disclose, Jada Cunningham: Nothing to Disclose