

Expanding the Weekend and Public Holiday Clinical Pharmacy Workforce



Ballarat Health Services
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Aim: To implement an expanded weekend clinical pharmacy workforce in response to increasing staff dissatisfaction in the face of a 7 day service organisational goal.

The Ballarat Health Services (BHS) Pharmacy Department weekend service was traditionally staffed by two pharmacists working remotely from the dispensary to facilitate clinical review and supply of inpatient, outpatient and discharge medication orders across the organisation equating to a more than 10 times resource reduction compared to weekday services. Support staff include one pharmacy technician and a 4 hour student shift (Saturdays only). Shift duration for pharmacists and technician are not set as staff are required to work until all medication requests are completed.

Traditional Weekend Service



Two Pharmacists



One Technician



One Student

Working Smarter, Not Harder



Three Pharmacists



One Technician



One Student

Average Total Pharmacist Hours

13.1 hours

15.1 hours

Total Staff Hours

22.8 hours

22.8 hours

Median Finish Time

4:00 PM

2:30 PM

Percentage of Patients Discharged before 12pm (midday)

30%

36%

Staff Satisfaction

“Working prior to the [additional pharmacist] on weekends was always very very stressful. Often I walked away feeling like I had not done the best for all my patients due to not having enough time/being pressured to get out quickly. Overall, weekend work was always stressful and it made me rethink my profession on a number of occasions.”

- Pharmacist 1

“[The additional pharmacist] has vastly improved the stress, morale and hours of work [on weekends]. The patients are getting discharged in a more timely manner (and safer manner as many more discharge scripts are being reviewed by pharmacy) which is having a positive effect on patient flow.”

- Pharmacist 2

Addition of 4 hours pharmacist time = Cost of 2 hours to organisation

Reduced clinical services provided by hospitals on weekends are associated with increased risks of patient harm and length of stay.^{1,2} The addition of clinical EFT deployed at ward level improves weekend efficiencies with consequent improvements in work conditions for all staff. Expanding the weekend clinical pharmacy service provides an excellent example of ‘working smarter, not harder’ to provide patient and staff focused improvements.

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References: ¹Peberdy MA, Ornato JP, Larkin GL, et al. Survival From In-Hospital Cardiac Arrest During Nights and Weekends. *JAMA*. 2008;299(7):785–792. doi:10.1001/jama.299.7.785

²Freemantle N, McNulty D, Bennett S, et al. Increased mortality associated with weekend hospital admission: a case for expanded seven day services? *BMJ*. 2015;351:h4596
person by amantaka from the Noun Project

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