

Hospital formulary

A formulary is a continually updated list of available medications and related information, representing the clinical judgment, resulting from a review of the clinical evidence, of physicians, pharmacists, and other clinicians in the diagnosis, prophylaxis, or treatment of disease and promotion of health.

Health systems should develop, maintain, and implement a formulary management process. This evidence-based process should not be based solely on economic factors. The formulary system should review and approve all policies related to the medication-use process; all medication-use policies, regardless of their origination, should flow through the P&T committee. The organization's medical staff leadership (ie, the body to which the P&T committee reports) should complete the final policy approval. Policy review and revision should occur as new information becomes available and at regularly established intervals (eg, annually). The organization should have medication-use policies that address the following:

- How medications are requested for addition to or deletion from the formulary
- How medications are reviewed for addition to or deletion from the formulary, including who performs the reviews
- How and when drug class reviews are conducted
- The process for developing, implementing, and monitoring medication-use guidelines
- Methods and policies for ensuring the safe procurement, prescribing, distribution, administration, and monitoring of medications
 - Methods for selection of suitable manufacturers for specific medications (ie, the pharmacy department is responsible for specifications for the quality, quantity, and source of supply of all medications, chemicals, biologicals, and pharmaceutical preparations used in the diagnosis and treatment of patients)
- The process for using nonformulary agents within the hospital and health system
- The process for managing radiopharmaceuticals
- The process for managing drug product shortages
- The process for developing an organization or health system-specific MUE plan
- Policies regarding specific medication-use processes (eg, procurement, prescribing, distribution, administration, monitoring, automation, and technology)
- The process for disseminating medication-use policies and how users will be educated regarding the process

- Process for accountability over medication delivery devices (eg, infusion pumps, dose error reduction software, intranasal atomizers)
- Consideration of medication access through prior authorization processes and patient assistance programs
- Implementation of P&T committee decisions into the electronic health record (EHR)

Advantage of formulary

- To discourage the use of “less than optimal drug therapy”, and
- To provide a generic product list.
- Generic product selection policies stimulate bio-equivalency comparison which prevents the unnecessary stocking of less than optimal products.
- Formularies must include the cost to provide relative cost data for similar drug products that are generically equivalent.
- Today new drugs and drug therapies are more complex, so the formulary system will rely more upon ‘recommended for use’ criteria for many drugs.
- A drug that has specific advantages in a small number of patients will be included in the formulary.

Disadvantages of formulary

- Deprive the physician of his right and privilege to prescribe and obtain the brand of his choice.
- Permits the pharmacist to act as the sole judge of whom brands of drugs are to be purchased & dispensed.

Format of Hospital formulary

The format of the Hospital formulary is decided by the PTC

Although the physical appearance and structure of the formulary play an important influence on its use elaborate and expensive artwork in the formulary is of no use, as it is meant for professional use, so it should be visually pleasing, easily readable with proper grammar, correct spelling and with neat designing. It is the main point for improving drug therapy in hospitals and is dependent on the abilities of a pharmacist. The general format of the hospital formulary includes:

1. It should be in bound form
2. It should be light in weight, and easy to carry
3. It should contain all essential information
4. The format of printing includes white pages and black ink
5. The pages should not be colored

Contents of Hospital formulary

The typical composition of hospital formulary is

- 1) Title page
- 2) Names & titles of the members of the PTC
- 3) Table of contents
- 4) Information on hospital policies & procedures concerning drugs
 - a. The pharmacy and therapeutics committee of hospital
 - b. Objective and operation of the formulary systems
 - c. Hospital regulations and procedures for prescribing and dispensing drugs.
 - d. Hospital pharmacy services and procedures.
 - e. How to use the formulary
- 5) Products accepted for use at hospital
 - a. Items added and deleted from the previous edition.
 - b. Generic, Brand name cross-reference list.
 - c. Pharmacologic/therapeutic index with relative cost codes.
 - d. Descriptions of formulary drug products by pharmacological therapeutic class.
- 6) Appendix
 - a. Central service equipment and supply list
 - b. Guidelines for calculating pediatrics doses
 - c. Schedule of standard drug administration.

Distribution of formulary

- A hospital formulary is an important written document that contains the list of preparations including important information which reflects the current clinical views of medical staff.

- A formulary is the painstaking effort of any hospital to guide medical and paramedical staff.
- The formulary is very educative and useful to the members of the “Health Care Team” and
- Hence copies of the formulary should be placed at each patient care unit, including clinics, out-patient care areas, and emergency room.

Revision requirement and procedure

Generally, for addition, deletion, change in the drug products, removal of drug from the market, change in the hospital policies and procedures the formulary needs revision annually.

There are two methods for the revision of the formulary.

- One method is to attach a separate sheet to the back cover of formulary books.
- The second method is by using a different color for the cover of each edition of the formulary

Which will help to reduce any confusion between present and past editions?

Revision in the formulary should incorporate the regular review of selected categories to ensure that

- Only the most cost-effective products are used.
- Such review may lead to the deletion of certain drugs.
- During revision and preparation of the formulary system,
- Cost-effectiveness and
- Cost-benefit analysis methods are generally used.

Role of hospital formulary system

1. It provides therapeutic benefits to the patient and healthcare providers in a hospital
2. It minimizes the chances of duplication of drugs, thereby helping in maintaining the inventory budget
3. It provides information about the recent and advanced development in medicines
4. It helps in the selection of suitable drugs in a hospital
5. It provides information related to the availability of drug stock in a hospital
6. It gives information related to reported adverse drug reactions in a hospital
7. It provides a list of emergency drugs
8. It provides guidelines related to prescribing, procuring, dispensing, and administering drugs in a hospital

9. It contains the list of physicians, qualifications, and available timings so that other staff and patients may get benefits
10. It helps in the rational use of the drug