

ASHP Research and Education Foundation *Pharmacy Forecast*: A leader's resource to plan for the future

As the 2018 *Pharmacy Forecast* is published, pharmacists and pharmacy leaders around the country are facing new and unprecedented uncertainty—political, financial, technological, and organizational ambiguities are creating a climate where decision-making is incredibly difficult. It is under these circumstances that the value of strategic planning becomes the most clear and that the lack of planning creates tremendous risk. Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty is challenging, as leaders fall back onto intellectual shortcuts that may oversimplify factors that should influence those decisions. Even the best, most insightful, and methodically developed strategic plan cannot ensure the success of an organization, but a strong strategic planning process can increase confidence and allow leaders the time to be more focused and thoughtful in their decision-making as new challenges arise. As with the first 5 editions of this report, we hope that this sixth edition, which is available open access, encourages and supports coordinated strategic planning efforts in health systems.

In this edition of the *Pharmacy Forecast*, we focus on a wide range of elements driving complexity and ambiguity in healthcare. Advances in clinical information technology are providing tools to meet our goal of improved patient health but often come at an incredible cost. Public policy and health policy programs intended to stabilize the healthcare delivery system, particularly its financial system, are intensifying the challenges faced by those who manage that delivery system. Navigating the increasingly turbulent whitewater of healthcare today, it is easy to become risk averse and bypass opportunities to embrace innovation. The articles in this edition provide valuable recommendations that will, hopefully, inspire enthusiasm and encourage us all to embrace change.

While the *Pharmacy Forecast* is a major stimulus to assist leaders in reflecting on medication-use issues in a complex healthcare environment, it does not offer a blueprint for how to address the strategic planning process in one's organization. Reading the report, one may gain insight and ideas for how to approach an issue at hand or on the horizon, but success may ultimately be dependent upon the development of a well-conceived strategic plan

at a departmental level that aligns with the health system's critical issues. Tools are available on the Practice Advancement Initiative portion of the ASHP website that can help one assess the progress in the provision of contemporary, patient-focused pharmacy services (www.ashpmedia.org/pai/index.html). In addition, tools and techniques that facilitate the strategic planning process are readily available through a Web search and can be applied to facilitate the preparation, development, and maintenance of a vibrant strategic plan. Effective leaders are never hesitant to seek assistance, and there are many skilled planners in your organization and the community who can assist you in the process.

Planning is not the sole responsibility of the individual leading an organization. He or she needs committed practice leaders and our profession's emerging leaders to invest in his or her leadership skills and to embrace engagement in strategic planning. Programs such as the Pharmacy Leadership Academy, the Pharmacy Leadership Institute, and the ASHP Leaders Conference are tremendously valuable for building leadership bench strength, and the participation of team members in each program offering should be considered essential. Now is the time to assess if you are fulfilling your commitment to organizational planning and determine the steps you will take to enhance your planning process and expand the leadership skill sets of your team members.

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Keywords: drug therapy trends, forecasting, healthcare analytics, health-system trends, patient care trends, pharmacy leadership, pharmacy trends, pharmacy workforce, population health, strategic planning

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DOI 10.2146/ajhp170781