

## Public policies and the attributions of pharmaceutical services in the face of health challenges



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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Public policies are essential for pharmaceutical services to fulfill their role of ensuring access to medicines and promoting their proper use, with qualified professionals and regulations that guarantee the quality and availability of medicines. **Objective:** To analyze how public policies impact pharmaceutical services

and their attributions in the face of the challenges faced by the health system, seeking to identify strategies to improve access to and rational use of medicines. **Results:** It was identified that the implementation of efficient public policies is crucial to promote the rational use and guarantee access to medicines. The importance of investing in the training of professionals, the improvement of the infrastructure of health units, and the implementation of efficient drug distribution systems were highlighted. The results of the study emphasize the importance of integrated and comprehensive public policies to address the challenges of pharmaceutical care in the context of health. **Conclusion:** Public policies should seek solutions to ensure the sustainability of the health system and the quality of pharmaceutical care, including investments in the training of professionals and improvements in infrastructure and distribution of medicines.

**Keywords:** Public Policies, Attributions, Pharmaceutical Assistance, Challenges.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In 1946, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as complete physical, mental and social well-being, not only related to the absence of physical diseases, but also to a homeostasis that comprises the balance of all the links that make up the human being (World Health Organization, 1946).

According to the 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, health is a right of all and a duty of the state, this affirmation is guaranteed through social and economic policies that seek to reduce the threats of disease and its aggravations, ensuring universal and equal access, in the face of actions and services for the promotion, health protection and recovery (Brazil, 1988).

In this scenario, pharmaceutical care is inserted as a social right to health, therefore, it must be fully guaranteed to every citizen, according to the principles of integrality. In view of this, in order for the Brazilian State to be able to meet these standards, it is necessary to implement public policies and



public health and pharmaceutical services in order to serve the individual, family and community (Marques and Dallari, 2007).

According to Souza and Fonseca (2001), Pharmaceutical Assistance is a series of actions related to medicines, such as supply, conservation, quality control, safety and therapeutic efficacy of medicines, monitoring and evaluation of their use, information on medicines, education of health professionals, patients and the community in order to ensure the rational use of medicines.

Faced with this health theme, Brazil achieved a very important leap with the creation of the Unified Health System (SUS), being considered one of the greatest social achievements of the constitution, which was implemented through Law 8080/1990, based on the criteria of equality, democratic management and integrality, being a set of actions aimed at the promotion, protection and recovery of health, ensuring individuals' access to comprehensive health care (Brasil, 2000).

This chapter aims to analyze how public policies impact pharmaceutical services and their attributions in the face of the challenges faced by the health system, seeking to identify strategies to improve access to medicines and promote their rational use.

## 2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Peixoto (2022), when referring to comprehensive health, it is worth emphasizing the importance of the pharmaceutical professional, working in management and health care. The pharmacist in public health acts in the promotion, protection and recovery of health, through the promotion of the rational use of medicines, programming, acquisition, conservation and distribution of medicines, also acting in the evaluation of pharmacotherapy, offering better adherence to treatment through pharmaceutical guidance and interventions, avoiding problems related to medicines.

According to the WHO, the inappropriate use of medicines is considered a global problem with serious consequences. It is estimated that about half of all medications that are prescribed, dispensed or sold are inappropriate, half of all patients do not use the medications correctly and/or self-medicate. Such practices can cause harm to the individual, which can cause intoxication, drug resistance, drug interactions, among other drug-related problems (Brasil, 2013).

In view of the health promotion actions inherent to the pharmaceutical professional, it is worth discarding the importance of the same in the face of actions to promote the rational use of medicines in order to achieve the sustainable development goals, especially focused on health and well-being (Brasil, 2021).

The Sustainable Development Goals were created by the United Nations (UN), presenting a global pact in favor of sustainable development, with the objective of guaranteeing the basic needs of human beings through policies that are ecologically correct, socially just and economically viable (Moreira 2019).



During the meeting held from 25 to 27 September 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York, the members of the organization reinforced the importance of Goal 3 of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aims to ensure that all human beings have access to quality medicines, thereby promoting equality and dignity for all in a healthy environment. In addition, paragraph 26 reinforces the importance of health for all and the need to provide medicines to achieve this goal. It is essential that this need is shared collectively by all of humanity to ensure health and well-being for all (Vieira, 2020).

From the perspective of health care, the pharmacist has a fundamental role, acting in direct patient care, performing pharmaceutical care, which refers to the act of dispensing medications, which is the exclusive attribution of such a professional. At this time, the individual will receive all the guidance regarding the care for their treatment to be effective, and the guarantee that the prescribed drugs and pharmaceutical forms will lead to the best therapeutic results, in addition to guidance related to drug interactions, storage and correct disposal of medications (Pinheiro 2010).

Therefore, for the development of pharmaceutical care, one of the first steps is the organization of the health system and the management of medicines, ensuring access, the availability of the population to medicines and the relationship between the pharmacist and the health team. In order for this care to be of quality, in addition to the available resources and appropriate planning, it must follow the stages of the pharmaceutical care cycle (Pereira; Freitas, 2008).

Figure 1 - Representation of the Pharmaceutical Care Cycle.



SOURCE: (Coradi, 2012)

In the Pharmaceutical Services cycle, selection is the starting point, where an activity is fundamental. Selection is a process of choosing effective and safe drugs, essential to meet the needs of this population, based on the prevalent diseases, in order to ensure quality drug therapy at the various levels of health care (Nunes; Silva, 2002).



Scheduling medicines consists of quantities to be purchased, to meet a certain demand for services, in a defined period of time, having a direct influence on the supply and access to medicines. Therefore, it is one of the essential stages of the Pharmaceutical Care cycle (Coradi, 2012).

The acquisition consists of a set of procedures through which the process of purchasing the medicines established by the program is carried out, with the objective of supplying the health units in quantity, quality and lower cost/effectiveness, aiming to maintain the regularity and functioning of the system. Distribution should always be monitored (Nunes; Silva, 2002).

An information system must be available that provides, at any time, up-to-date data on the physical and financial position of inventories, quantities received and distributed, consumption and demand data for each product, and any other information that is necessary for proper management. Dispensing is where the pharmacist will provide one or more medications to a patient in response to the presentation of a prescription prepared by an authorized professional/physician. Thus, the pharmacist informs and guides the patient on the proper use of the medication (Nunes; Silva, 2002).

In order to have a quality Pharmaceutical Care, in addition to a well-planned and executed Pharmaceutical Cycle, it is extremely important that in the final stage of the Pharmaceutical Care Cycle (dispensation), Pharmaceutical Care occurs, which refers to the moment when the patient will have all the pharmaceutical care (Araújo; Ueta; Freitas, 2005).

Pharmaceutical Care is the interaction of the pharmacist with the user in a direct way, promoting a rational pharmacotherapy and obtaining defined and effective results, through which it is possible to achieve concrete results, better adherence to treatment, avoid PRM's, and thus improve the patient's quality of life (Brasil, 2002).

According to Molina et al. (2016), the importance of the pharmacist and his role in line with the principles of the SUS is evident. In view of the various areas of exclusive activity of pharmacists in the primary care sectors, it is extremely important that there are mandatory pharmacists in these sectors, because in some municipalities these positions are occupied by other professionals.

Considering the attributions and the need of this professional, public agencies need to recognize the importance of the pharmacist in primary care, in view of the improvements that these professionals bring to the patient, with the main function of guiding the administration of medicines correctly to patients, in addition, participating effectively in the selection, programming, acquisition, storage, distribution and dispensing of medicines. This proves the importance of pharmacists in primary care, as they are the only ones qualified to perform such actions (Lima *et al.*, 2021).

According to Silva's (2021) studies, there are still many obstacles to be faced for the complete implementation of pharmaceutical care in the unified health system, the lack of integration of the pharmaceutical professional with multiprofessional health teams is one of the factors that contribute to this fact, as well as political, ethical, and moral issues.



70 years ago, the international community recognized health as a Fundamental Human Right. Constitutions around the world have followed suit, but their implementation requires an even higher standard. This situation can be seen in the case of medicines, which, despite being included in the third goal of the Sustainable Development Goals, by 2030 still face obstacles that limit their distribution and access. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to overcome these constant difficulties (Petersen, 2014).

Thus, according to Fernandes (2021), the awareness that these measures are difficult to carry out at the present time, however, must be exposed and discussed, to promote the mobilization and effort of the State to ensure the human right of the poorest sectors of the population to have access to medicines, whether or not on the initiative of the government, avoiding depriving themselves of what is essential for their subsistence. In the case of Brazil, this is a situation that is directly dependent on several factors, including the budget allocation linked to three normative instruments: the Multi-Year Plan, the Budget Guidelines Law and the Annual Budget Law, formatted in the Federal Constitution.

Thus, Vieira (2020) states that, however, there is a glimmer of hope, indicating that a consensus can be reached, as long as the SDG proposals highlighting goals 3 are met. The time will come when the collective conscience will awaken to a set of values and principles that guarantee all citizens the respect and protection of their rights by the very State that shelters them. Perhaps, then, we can aspire to a just and egalitarian society.

Thus, the pharmacist as a health promoter is essential that his inclusion in debates pertinent to his profession and the area of health care is encouraged by the competent bodies, because it is known that through the participation of the pharmacist several benefits are obtained in relation to the improvement of the quality of public health, such as the improvement of the control of expenses with inputs, the promotion of the rational use of medicines and the reduction in cases of drug poisoning (Bonilla-acosta, 2021).

### 3 FINAL THOUGHTS

Public policies play a fundamental role in the search for the effectiveness of the health system, particularly with regard to the attributions of Pharmaceutical Services in the face of health challenges. It is essential to have a strategic plan for the performance of pharmaceutical professionals, aiming to ensure access to and rational use of medicines. This requires the implementation of programs that ensure equitable access to medicines, the qualification of professionals for the correct prescription and dispensing, as well as strict control of both the quality and costs of these products.

The promotion of the rational use of medicines, through education and awareness of the population, also plays an important role in the search for quality health. Finally, the need for transparent and effective management is emphasized, with the use of technologies and the establishment of performance indicators, aiming at constant monitoring and evaluation of the policies implemented. In



this way, it is possible to overcome the challenges faced in the field of health, ensuring the effectiveness of public policies and the well-being of the population.



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