HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS: 
BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE
Use the Shortest Effective Antibiotic Duration

SCENARIO
You are performing medication reconciliation and reviewing discharge antibiotic orders for a patient.

Antibiotic stewardship programs are targeting interventions to reduce unnecessarily long durations of antibiotic treatment. In adult patients who have a timely clinical response, guidelines suggest the following durations for uncomplicated cases of these infections:

- **Community-Acquired Pneumonia:** Five days
- **Hospital-Acquired Pneumonia:** Seven days
- **Non-purulent Cellulitis:** Five days

**Pharmacists can help optimize antibiotic duration by:**

1. Adding the total number of days of uninterrupted inpatient antibiotic therapy to planned post-discharge antibiotic duration.

2. Alerting the provider if the total duration of inpatient and post-discharge antibiotic therapy exceeds the recommended duration according to treatment guidelines.

3. Discussing optimizing the duration of post-discharge antibiotic therapy with the provider if the patient had an uncomplicated clinical course and has responded appropriately to treatment.

The scenarios and recommendations discussed are applicable to most immunocompetent adult patients. Prior to making interventions, always assess the individual patient and use your clinical judgment. Follow your institution’s treatment guidelines when applicable.

References:

www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use