

# World Pharmacist Day: Evolving roles, emerging challenges

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## What is World Pharmacist Day?

**World Pharmacist Day**, observed annually on September 25, celebrates the vital role pharmacists play in healthcare worldwide. The theme for 2025 is **“Think Health, Think Pharmacist”**, emphasising pharmacists’ contribution to building resilient, sustainable health systems.<sup>1</sup>

## The problem

Pharmacists are often the **most accessible healthcare professionals**, especially in underserved areas, and **their role is expanding** to include providing patient care, administering vaccines, promoting rational use of antibiotics, and supporting public health campaigns.<sup>1,2</sup> However, healthcare systems worldwide are facing challenges such as **economic pressures, workforce shortages** and **rising demand**.<sup>1</sup>

The **2025 American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) Forecast** report captures a snapshot of the emerging healthcare trends that will influence the pharmacy profession.<sup>3</sup> Using a “wisdom of the crowd” method based on inputs from **321 pharmacy leaders** across the U.S., the report identified six main concerns that pharmacists believe are likely to become more pressing over the next five years, and provides strategic guidance for pharmacists and health-system leaders.<sup>3</sup>

### Financial pressure

Rising costs, payer restrictions, and reimbursement cuts are straining health systems

### Ultra-High-Cost drugs

Cell and gene therapies challenge affordability, access, and workforce readiness

### Whole Person Health

Shift from “sick care” to holistic health-integrating behavioural, social, environmental factors

### Artificial Intelligence

AI adoption is accelerating amidst concerns about bias, regulation, and workforce impact

### Workforce instability

Technician shortages, burnout, declining pharmacy school enrollment threaten sustainability

### Primary care crisis

Pharmacists can help fill gaps in primary care through expanded clinical roles



## Our comments

These are “interesting times” for the global healthcare landscape, reflecting broader issues of social, economic, and political instability worldwide. On the other hand, this situation presents some unique opportunities to expand the traditional role of pharmacists.

- ✓ As healthcare systems face **shortages in primary care**, pharmacists are increasingly stepping up to the role of **frontline healthcare providers**. Their accessibility and expertise make them essential to filling critical gaps in patient care.
- ✓ The **cost of healthcare innovation** is still outpacing access, with the price of breakthrough treatments like gene and cell therapies putting a strain on healthcare budgets. Pharmacists are positioned to **help systems navigate affordability, access, and ethical distribution** of these treatments.
- ✓ **AI has entered the pharmacy space**, from automating medication histories to supporting clinical decisions, but the promise of greater efficiency is offset by concerns about bias, regulation, and the need for human oversight. Here, pharmacists must **balance innovation with responsibility**.

**World Pharmacist Day 2025** gives us an opportunity to recognise and appreciate that there is a lot more to a pharmacist’s job than simply dispensing our prescriptions!

## References

1. <https://www.fip.org/world-pharmacists-day>
2. Mohammad Hamed Almontashiri et al. (2024) The Evolving Role of Pharmacists in Healthcare: A Systematic Review of Clinical, Community, and Digital Health Interventions. Afr. J. Biomed. Res. 27(3), 1085-1091
3. Joseph T DiPiro et al (2025) ASHP and ASHP Foundation Pharmacy Forecast 2025: Strategic Planning Guidance for Pharmacy Departments in Hospitals and Health Systems. Am. J. Health-Syst. Pharm. 82 (2), 17–47