


# PHARMACOGENETIC SERVICES

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Implementing Pharmacogenomics in Your Business  
NCPA Annual Convention

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HOW DO YOU  
SELECT A LAB FOR  
PGX TESTING AND  
WHERE DO YOU GO  
FROM THERE?

## PGX LAB SELECTION

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Selecting a pharmacogenetic test to market from your pharmacy may seem like a daunting task. Our goal is to make things easier for you by providing guidance on important criteria to consider during the selection process. This will ensure that you are selecting a lab and product that you feel comfortable sharing with your patients. Below you will find 8 categories to consider when selecting a pharmacogenetic lab.

- 1. Content:** Assess the information that is utilized by the lab to provide pharmacogenetic guidance. Do they use evidence-based standards? Avoid programs that use proprietary outputs where labs refuse to divulge their methods for providing recommendations. We suggest selecting a lab that is transparent in sharing the the clinical data that supports recommendations.

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**2. Quality Control:** Assess the test design and the use in your specific patient population. Does the testing panel account for differences in certain ethnic groups? The occurrence of minor alleles can vary depending on ethnic group and if this is not represented in the panel, you may want to consider a test that is designed to account for these differences.

**3. Resources:** Many labs will offer training for pharmacists to support the use of their product. This may include a certification process where you can learn more about pharmacogenetics and how to appropriately explain this test to your patients.

**4. Marketing:** Consider the materials that are provided by the lab. Do they provide guidance on which patients may benefit most from pharmacogenetic testing? Some labs will have marketing packets that can be used for reaching out to your patients.

**5. Authorizations:** We recommend involving the provider in the process from the start but this is not always a lab requirement. Consider what authorizations are required to order the test. Providers are more receptive to recommendations if they are aware this test is being completed for their mutual patients.

**6. Communication:** How does the lab communicate with the end user? Some genetic testing is direct-to-consumer but it is important that pharmacogenetic information be relayed to the patient in a way they can understand. We recommend using a product that involves the pharmacist before any results are shared with patients.

**7. Confidentiality:** Assess if the information is shared with anyone other than the patient's providers or those who have prior consent to review results. Patients will often ask if their information is sold and this is an important question to be able to answer.

**8. Cost:** Consider the cost to the patient. Is the test affordable for the patient population you are targeting? Having a market in mind prior to product selection can help ensure success.

Reference: Mukerjee G, Huston A, Kabakchiev B, et al. User considerations in assessing pharmacogenomic tests and their clinical support tools. *NPJ Genom Med* 2018;3:26.

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Every day pharmacists fill prescriptions. How many of those have a genetic marker? Are we just waiting for something to happen or can we bring ourselves closer to the reality of precision medicine?

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# HOW-TO GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PGX SERVICES

What do you need to know to start building your pharmacogenetic testing program tomorrow? Follow the five steps below to create a meaningful, sustainable program that is valuable to your pharmacy, providers, and patients.

- 1. Pursue additional training.** Many pharmacists now receive basics of pharmacogenetics as part of the PharmD curriculum, but we recommend looking into additional training programs to learn how to appropriately convey information to patients and how to fully maximize information included on pharmacogenetic reports. There are many training programs available so consider what components you will need to be familiar with to make the most of your program in the community pharmacy setting.
- 2. Compare pharmacogenetic labs.** There are several components that must be assessed to select the right lab for your program, so consider what will best serve your patient population. Labs may also have their own training program to cover how to best utilize their reports.
- 3. Consider your target population.** You will want to have an idea of which patients might benefit from this test. Many medications include pharmacogenetic guidance on package labeling. Patients on these medications will likely have an immediate benefit from taking the test while others may benefit from the test in the future. There are tools that will stratify patients based upon their current medication list to determine who will benefit most from pharmacogenetic testing.
- 4. Market your program.** Some pharmacogenetic labs will have pre-built marketing kits that can be used in your pharmacy. You will want to consider who you are targeting and how to best reach the audience. Remember, the audience you are trying to reach may be different from the population coming through your doors. You may choose to market to providers to let them know you offer the service or to individual patients.
- 5. Assess your workflow.** Determine what model will best suit your pharmacy workflow. You may want to consider involving a technician to assist with scheduling patient appointments or to assist with sending correspondence to providers. Additionally, you may want to consider additional clinical decision support tools. These may assist you with providing recommendations if a new medication is added to a patient's regimen and they want guidance based on their specific genetic markers.

