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DESCRIPTION

Drug therapy problem identification, management and resolution are critical parts of a Clinical Pharmacist's role while managing patient oncologic treatments. As the complexity of oncology treatments continues to increase, the pharmacist's role is becoming more imperative in supporting the healthcare team to enhance and optimize patient care and safety. The Canadian Society of Healthcare-Systems Pharmacy (CSHP) outlines the expectation for pharmacists to identify and resolve drug therapy problems in the Canadian consensus on Clinical Pharmacy Key Performance Indicators. This is also supported by the Ambulatory Oncology Clinical Pharmacy consensus guidance by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO). At Humber River Health's Cancer Clinic, the Clinical Oncology Pharmacist team initiated tracking of drug therapy problems and associated interventions prior to oral oncology treatment initiation.

OBJECTIVE

To identify, document and manage drug therapy problems before initiating oral oncology treatments, thereby improving patient safety and treatment outcomes.

ACTIONS TAKEN

A Drug Therapy Assessment documentation tool was embedded into the electronic medical record to support documentation and categorization of drug therapy problems identified during the Clinical Oncology Patient Support Pharmacist's assessment at the initiation of new oral treatments. The categories of drug therapy problems included:

- Unnecessary drug therapy
- Needs additional drug therapy
- Wrong drug
- Dose too low
- Dose too high
- Adverse drug reaction
- Non-adherence
- Drug interaction

Pharmacists documented drug details (name, dose, route, frequency), recommendations, and the healthcare team members involved in managing each issue.

Drug Therapy Problem Summary in the Cancer Clinic July-September 2025

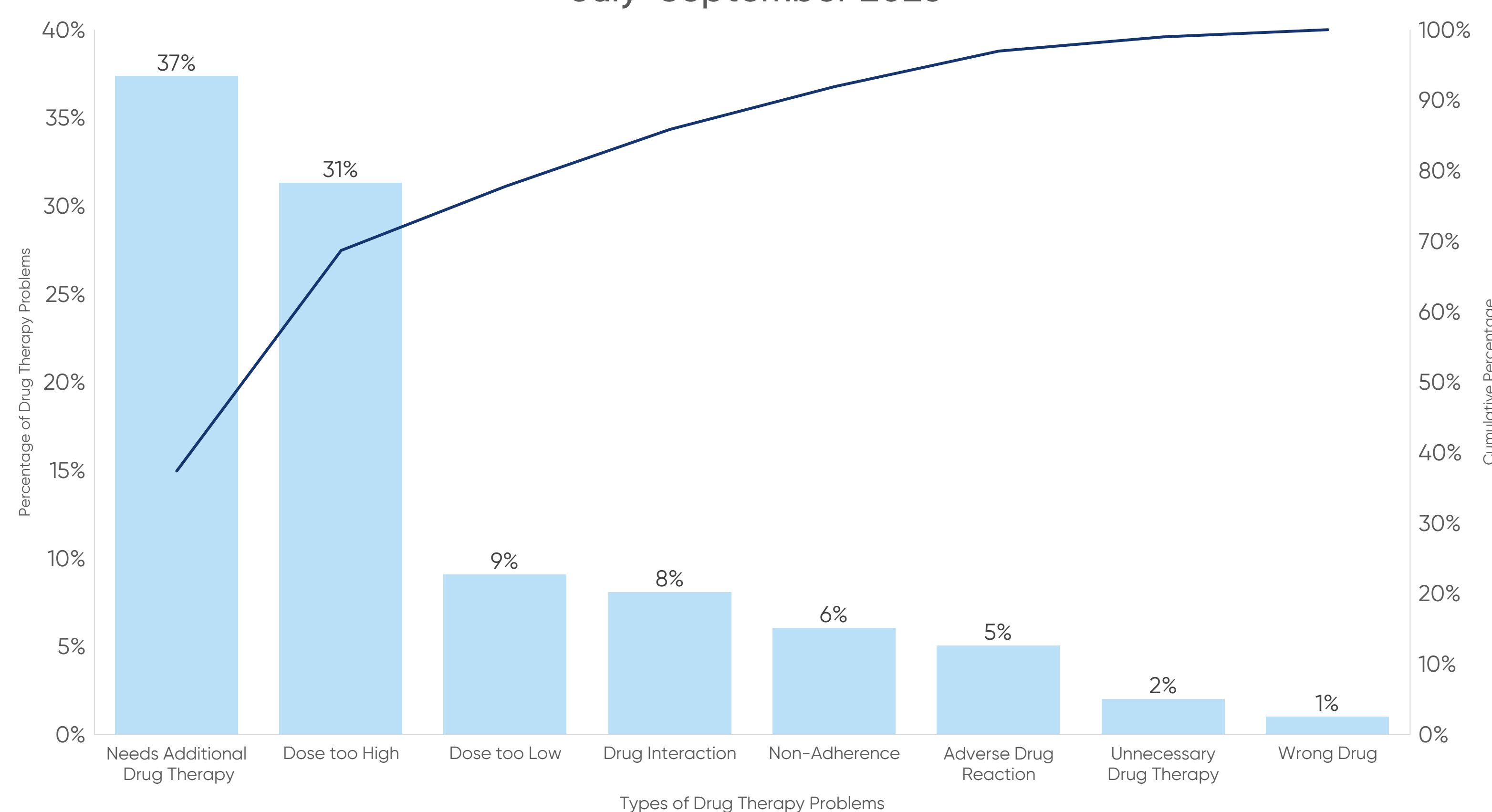


Figure 1. Summary of drug therapy problems managed by the Cancer Clinic Pharmacist team from July-September 2025 after the documentation was initiated.

Number of Drug Therapy Problems Identified Per Oncology Patient

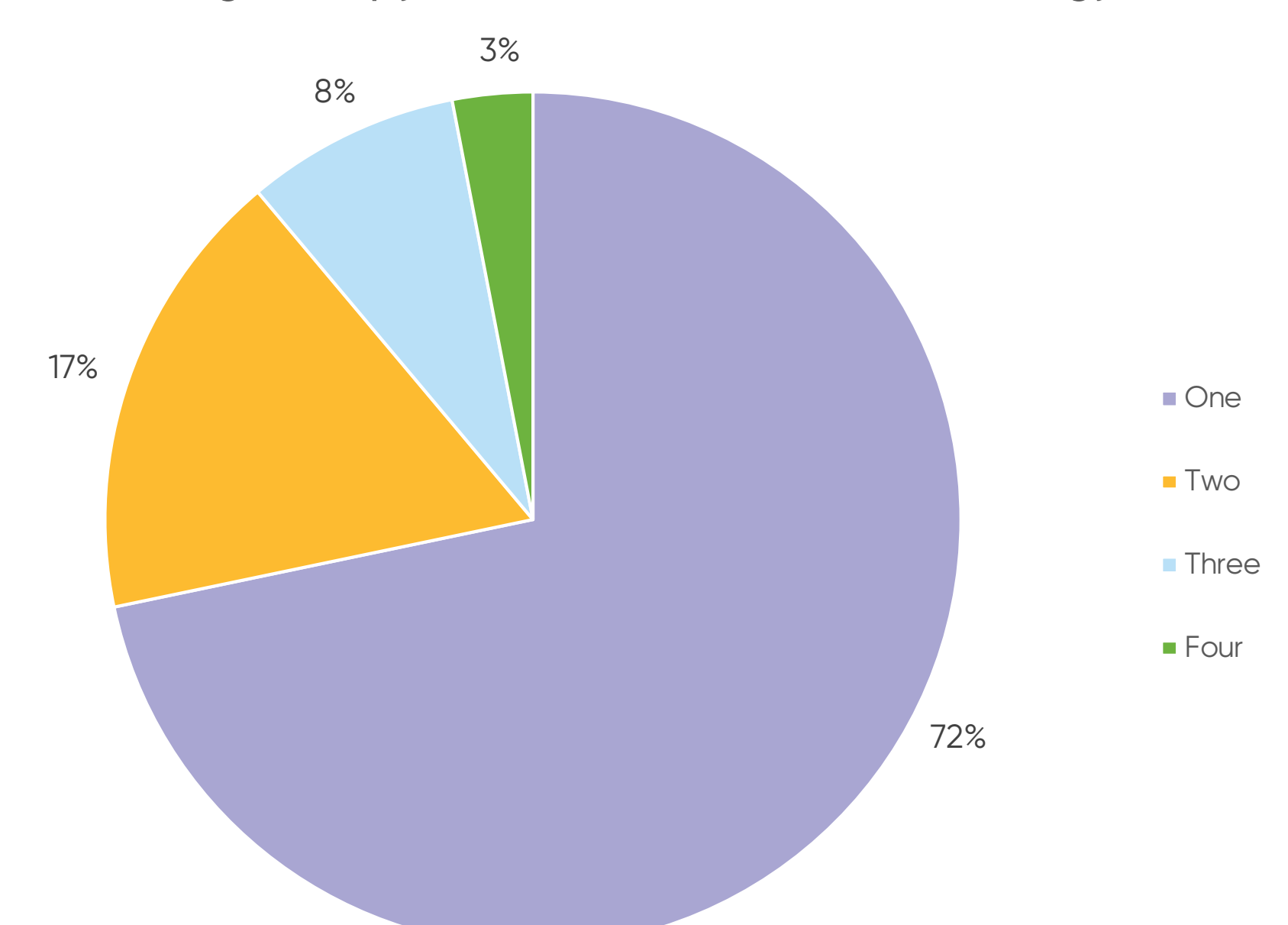


Figure 2. Number of Drug Therapy Problems Identified Per Oncology Patient. 72% of patients had one drug therapy problem and 28% had more than one drug therapy problem, further demonstrating the complexity of cancer patients and their treatments.

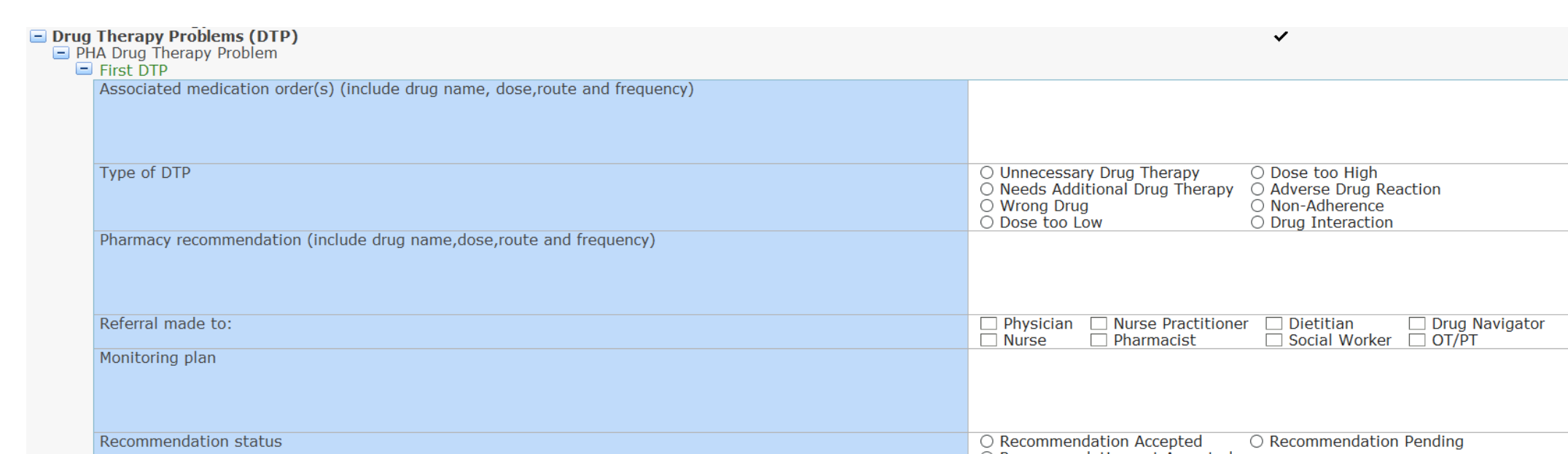


Figure 3. Screenshot of the Pharmacy Drug Therapy Assessment Documentation LIVE in the electronic medical record system.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Over three months, 99 drug therapy problems were identified across all categories. The most frequent were "Needs Additional Drug Therapy" (37%) and "Dose Too High" (31%). It was noted that 72% of patients had one drug therapy problem, while 28% had more than one drug therapy problem, further demonstrating the complexity of cancer patients and their treatments. The Drug Therapy Assessment documentation tool highlights proactive interventions aimed at optimizing patient care and ensuring patient safety.

LESSONS LEARNED

Embedding the structured documentation into the EMR facilitates consistent tracking and resolution of drug therapy problems, demonstrating the proactive role of oncology pharmacists.

