



Advanced Pharmacy Concepts

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This Month's Acronyms:

CAHP– Consumer Assessment of Health Plan

CAHPS– Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey

ENHANCE Trial:

Results of the ENHANCE trial presented at the American College of Cardiology (ACC) revealed clinical outcomes do not support use of higher cost cholesterol lowering therapies. An ACC statement recommends adherence to current guidelines; using traditional statins to the maximally tolerated dose, or to goal, as the first line treatment for patients with coronary artery disease. Health plans will promote use of lower cost generic statins through formularies, step edits, and other programs.

Tamper Resistant Rx Pads Update

As of April 1, Medicaid prescriptions must be written on pads with at least one of the following three features:

- 1) prevent unauthorized copying of a completed or blank prescription form;
- 2) prevent the erasure or modification of information written by the prescriber;
- 3) prevent the use of counterfeit prescription forms.

No later than October 1, 2008, to be considered tamper resistant, a prescription pad must contain all of the foregoing three characteristics.

Times are Changing...

Disease management is undergoing a renaissance as new and improved programs, often an element of Wellness Programs are seeing unprecedented demand. Employee benefits are shifting and at APC, we're seeing the impact on our clients and their future plans. Employers are focused upon enhancing employee benefits with the objective of optimizing health and wellness, despite potential increases in cost.

The Health Management Research Center at the University of Michigan confirms greater change in the utilization of wellness programs in the past three years than in the past 25 years. Changes in financial structure and benefit design are occurring. Historically, program impact was minimized. Costs were compared in silos and cost shifting resulted. Avoiding prescription drug or preventive care costs decreased drug spending but ultimately resulted in higher costs as patient health deteriorated, often resulting in disability,

hospitalization, surgeries and rehabilitation. The cost impact, both in terms of direct medical expenses, and loss of productivity is quantifiable.

Despite actuarial models demonstrating costs associated with poor preventive health, aggressive management of chronic diseases via state of the art preventive health care strategies failed to motivate employers and insurers to embrace these programs. The lackluster response occurred as insurers face the reality that an estimated third of people with health coverage switch insurers every year.

Times have changed, and employers and health plans are demanding more. According to Mary Ross, Director of Consulting Services at APC, the arguments in favor of Wellness programs are compelling. "Wellness is a value-add for members to improve health and to keep them loyal to the health plan. Programs



to promote health will retain membership for health plans and employees for businesses."

Benefits departments, particularly for self insured employers are committed to preventive health care. Ultimately they anticipate lowering overall costs and contributing to a healthier work force.

In our next issue, we'll explore the dynamics of our changing health care environment, and impact on employers with goals of improving productivity, general patient health and longevity.

Rx Vending

Prescription vending may be gaining momentum. Nearly 30 states have made some modifications to their state regulations regarding automated dispensing of prescription drugs. The technology, which works much like an ATM Machine, has been piloted primarily in California. The units are now in place in several higher volume pharmacies and are being used to expedite pick up of prescription refills.

All original prescriptions must be collected in a traditional manner, via live interaction with a pharmacy technician or pharmacist, affording the opportunity for clinical consultation. Patients arrange with the pharmacy to have future refills available in the vending unit.

Developers argue anecdotally, but have not demonstrated that time saved at prescription pick up time may translate into increased number of clinical consultations.

This technology may enhance compliance with chronic drug therapies, potentially bolstering the efforts of employers and health plans seeking to maintain a healthier membership.

Did you Know: CMS projects prescription drug spending growth, which slowed in 2007, will accelerate for 2008-2017, due to leveling growth in generic dispensing & treatment guidelines calling for earlier use of pharmacotherapy