

# A national pharmacy-based 'wellness call' program for patients at high risk for COVID-19 complications resulted in increased refill rates for key maintenance medications

Presented at the Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting, April 2021

A wellness call for patients at high risk for COVID-19 complications was well received by patients and improved refill rates for three chronic medication classes.



## BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

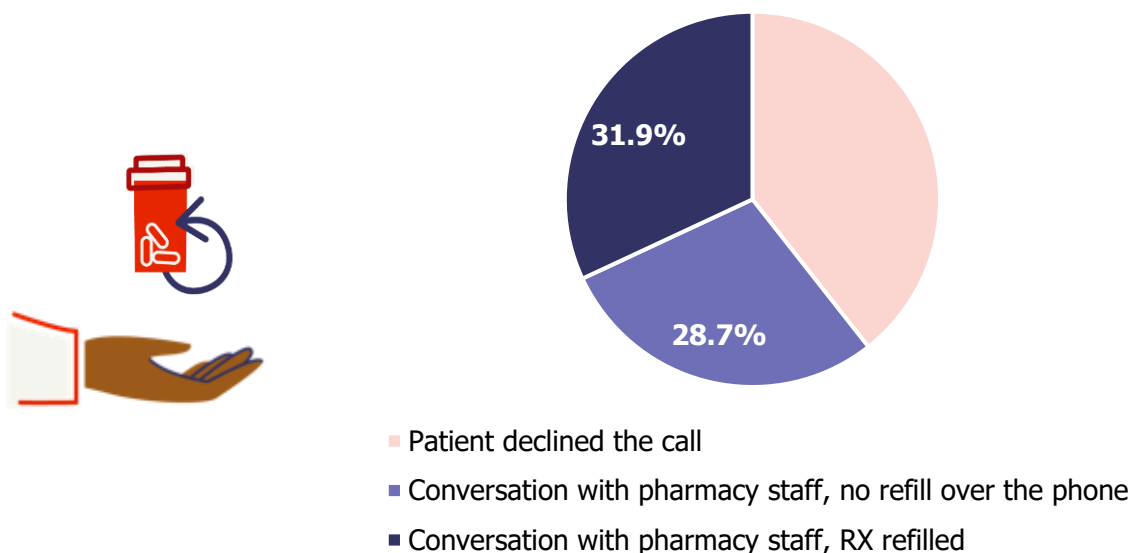
- Older adults and those with chronic illness are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications.
- Social distancing is critical for the prevention of COVID-19; however early in the pandemic concern arose regarding reduced access to regular healthcare services and medications.
- A wellness call program for high risk patients was developed to address this concern.
- The objective of this study was to describe the impact of a pharmacy-based wellness call program.

## METHODS

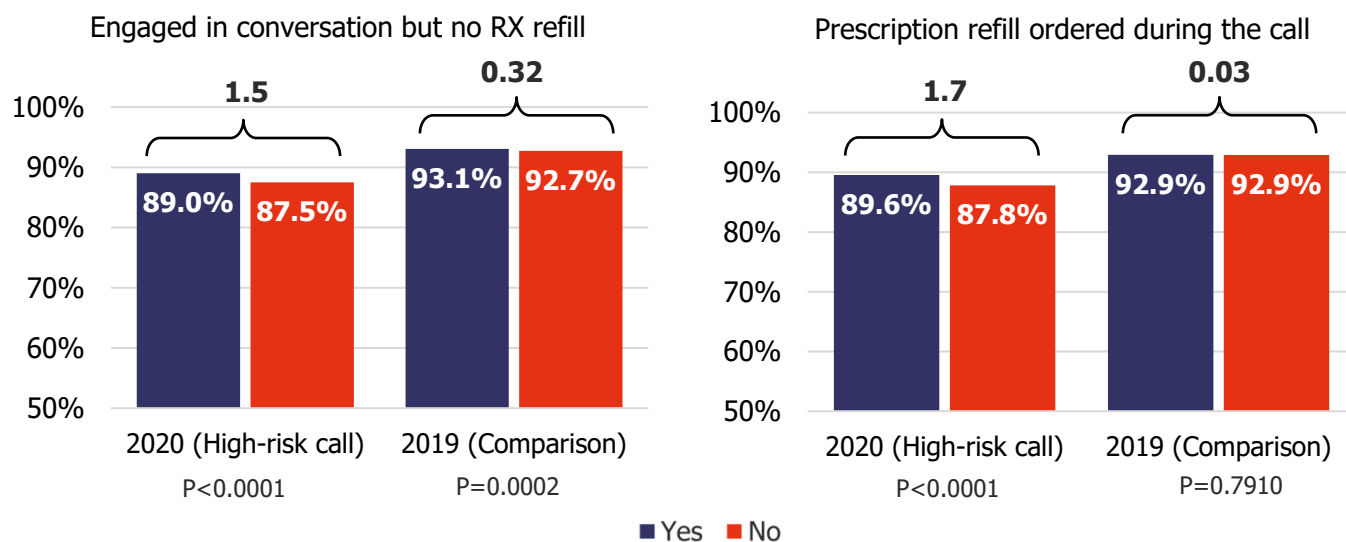
- Patients were assigned a risk score for COVID-19 complications using a model which incorporated age and comorbidities. A list of those at highest risk were sent to each store.
  - Pharmacy technicians called the patients, asking about their wellbeing, refilling prescriptions as needed, and offering pick-up and delivery options newly available due to the pandemic.
  - Patients were asked if they had any clinical questions and were transferred to the pharmacist accordingly.
  - Calls were made from April 1st – September 30th, 2020
- Patients were classified as having refilled if they picked up the prescription between -10 to 14 days of the due date.
- Medications to treat diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia were included in the analysis.
- Year-over-year (YOY) difference-in-differences (DID) comparison was used to analyze the impact of the wellness calls, with contact date-365 used to anchor and measure refill rates.
- Statistical software: SAS® Enterprise Guide® 7.1

## RESULTS

- Call responses
  - Patients' (n=2,164,498) mean age was 71.7 and 54.1% were female.
  - Pharmacy staff spoke to 88.7% of patients attempted.
  - Of these, 39.4% declined the call, 28.7% conversed with staff without ordering refills during the call, and 31.9% ordered refills during the call.



- Percent with prescription refill sold by cal response
  - Of patients who engaged in the call, 356,274 had prescriptions during a similar time frame in 2019.
  - Patients who engaged in the call were significantly more likely to refill their prescriptions (less likely to have >14 day gap) compared to those who did not engage. The difference in refill rate between groups was significantly greater than YOY (DID  $p < 0.0001$ ).



## CONCLUSION

- A wellness call for patients at high risk for COVID-19 complications was well received by patients and improved refill rates for three chronic medication classes.

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