Specialty Solutions
Oral Chemotherapy Cycle Management Program

Walgreens is a leading national provider of injectable, infused and oral specialty medications, managing these medications across multiple fulfillment channels. Walgreens has been conducting a Cycle Management Program for oral chemotherapy drugs. The goal: Determine whether our specialty pharmacy program can reduce costs and improve adherence.

The challenge
One month’s supply of oral chemotherapy drugs typically costs thousands of dollars. Often, a portion of these expensive cancer medications may go to waste when patients discontinue their therapy (primarily due to side effects) and do not complete a full month of therapy. Because of less physician oversight of self-administered oral chemotherapies compared to intravenous chemotherapies, there may be a delay before a physician is made aware of a patient experiencing medication side effects and the non-adherence that results.

Health plans are seeking strategies to help increase patient adherence to oral chemotherapies and reduce medication waste associated with early therapy discontinuation or dose reductions.

Walgreens solution
The Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy Oral Chemotherapy Cycle Management Program (CMP) provides optimized clinical management and support to patients who receive certain oral chemotherapy drugs.

Patients are contacted at predetermined intervals during their first month of therapy to educate them about their medication and potential side effects, assess for side effects and confirm medication adherence. If an adverse event is noted, our team contacts the physician as necessary.¹ The program provides support and communication throughout the patient’s medication cycle. At the end of the first month of therapy, the physician receives a report detailing the date the patient started therapy, the stop date and cycle (if applicable), adverse reactions or side effects and interventions performed on the patient’s behalf.²

Walgreens program benefits
- Indirect cost savings through avoidance of incremental healthcare costs associated with certain adverse and unexpected conditions.²
- Patient access to clinical support between physician office visits.
- Optimized clinical management allowing early recognition of adverse events.
- Timely access to actionable information enabling physicians to improve patient care.

See other side for more ►
Walgreens solution (continued)

Our cycle management program includes an optional monitored dispensing component that helps reduce expenses resulting from the medication waste associated with early therapy discontinuation or dose reductions due to side effects. With this option, a partial supply of the month’s medication is initially shipped. A mid-cycle assessment is performed and once it is determined that the patient is tolerating therapy, the remainder of the month's supply is shipped.

If serious side effects or problems are identified during the mid-cycle assessment, the remainder of the month's supply is held, thus preventing medication waste and saving payers on average $1,374 per patient in medication costs as well as in indirect costs such as hospitalizations.

The results

Increased persistency: In an analysis of a group of 2,237 patients over a thirty-one month period, Walgreens Oral Oncology CMP produced greater medication persistence and significant reduction in medication waste.1 After one month in the program, 69% of the participants were still taking their medications. Of those who were persistent after the first month, 72% were also persistent after the second month. Of those persistent after the second month, 76% were persistent after the third month. The increase in persistency was generated by improved access to Walgreens clinical support between physician office visits.

Cost savings: A retrospective test-control study compared patients enrolled on Walgreens CMP versus those not enrolled in the program.4 Patients involved had initiated their oral chemotherapy on Tarceva, Nexavar® or Sutent® using Walgreens Specialty during a 27-month period ending in February 2010. The study showed that approximately 34% of patients in the CMP test group could have avoided medication wastage if split-fill plans had been available, potentially realizing direct savings of approximately $934.20 per patient. Additionally, regression models showed that the CMP group had a 2.9% probability for reduction in hospital admissions, resulting in additional indirect savings of approximately $440.00 per patient.

It is worth noting that, while this analysis involved only three drugs, our oncology therapy management programs cover all oncology medications. Thus, much greater savings are quite likely when a larger set of medications is considered.

Walgreens has continued, and will continue, to explore innovative ways through our multi-channel network of 73,000 healthcare providers to improve patient outcomes while reducing costs.

— Michael Nameth, executive vice president of Walgreens Specialty Pharmacy

Call 877-727-9247
Or email us at solutions@walgreens.com

©2011 Walgreen Co. All rights reserved. M-023-0611