Optum Rx®

How to talk with patients about managing medication costs



With the rising cost of prescription drugs, the cost burden on patients has become an important issue that could affect their adherence to prescribed medications. While discussions about medication costs can be difficult, it's essential for providers to be comfortable having these conversations with patients.

The real-time benefit check (RTBC) tool within the electronic health record (EHR) system can help. By using this tool and PreCheck MyScript® (PCMS) data from Optum Rx, providers have access to patient-specific costs, coverage and therapeutic alternatives at point-of-care.

Cost conversation tips

Example of patient discussion points

- "Some of my other patients have expressed concerns about the price of their prescriptions. Has the cost of your medications been an issue for you?"
- "The approved drug is expensive. It only takes a few seconds to look at recommended alternatives to find a less costly medication to prescribe."
- "Some drugs can be expensive, and I don't want patients to pay more than necessary for medication. I've pulled up your insurance plan in my system to see if any less costly medications are available to treat your condition."
- "I see some prescriptions haven't been filled. I know these therapies can be expensive for some patients to refill. If cost is a concern, I can check if any lower-cost medications are available."

The benefits of using a RTBC tool:

Provider efficiency, time savings

Save up to 50 minutes per prescription for each patient by avoiding prior authorizations.[1]

Medication cost savings

Patients save on average $119 per prescription when switched to a lower-cost option. [2]

More patients pick up their prescriptions

Patients whose providers used PCMS data were more likely to obtain their medication than those whose providers did not use the tool. [3]

Provider benefits

- Better prescriber-patient conversations
- Fewer call-backs for PAs
- Less patient prescription abandonment at the pharmacy
- Real-time authorizations
- Accurate out-of-pocket cost comparison and patient cost by pharmacy
- Benefit coverage and preferred alternatives

Conclusion

In today's complex health care environment, getting patients the right medicine without delay is a key to reducing costs and improving outcomes. To meet this challenge, Optum Rx is giving providers real-time actionable prescription data so they may prescribe more effectively, reduce administrative burdens and reduce patient out-of-pocket costs.

Today, we have approximately 1 million providers utilizing PCMS servicing over 6 million members a month. [2]

1. Third party analysis of Optum Rx claims data, September 2018-August 2019.
2. Optum Rx analysis of full year (Jan-Dec'23) trial claim and production claim data.
3. Internal Optum Rx study.

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