

Consumer Ads by Rx Makers New Target on Capitol Hill



Along with congressional complaints about the high cost of drugs and lack of pricing transparency, direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertisements also are gaining the attention of lawmakers.

Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) has introduced legislation that would end tax breaks pharmaceutical manufacturers can take for advertising their medicines directly to consumers. Franken says his bill is designed to encourage companies to focus on developing new drugs instead of "marketing schemes."

DTC ads would be banned for the first three years a prescription drug is on the market, under a bill sponsored by

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.). She said the moratorium would help fight the rising cost of prescription drugs and protect consumers from misleading information.

DTC ad spending soared more than 60 percent in the past four years, hitting \$5.2 billion last year, reported STAT, a new digital publication affiliated with the *Boston Globe*. One-quarter of that spending went to just five drugs: Humira, Lyrica, Eliquis, Cialis, and Xeljanz.

Last year, the American Medical Association called for a total ban on drug ads directed at consumers. New Zealand is the only other country that permits them. ■



THE AUDIT ADVISOR

Affected by the ProAir HFA Shortage?

Q: I am unable to get a shipment of ProAir HFA from my wholesaler anytime soon. What are my options?

A: You have two options, both requiring you to talk to the prescriber to get a new prescription or authorization to change the drug dispensed.

Option 1: Change the patient to Ventolin HFA or Proventil HFA. These are not AB rated to ProAir HFA, so you would need to talk to the prescriber to make sure that they are fine with changing the prescription to either of these choices.

Option 2: Change the patient to ProAir Respiclick. Again, this is not AB rated to ProAir HFA and does require a new prescription or clinical documentation approving the change. The Respiclick is billed as 1 each and also contains 200 puffs like the HFA.

If you receive a new prescription for ProAir, without the designation of HFA or Respiclick, PAAS National recommends that you verify which form the prescriber intends for the patient.

By Mark Jacobs, RPh, PAAS National, the Pharmacy Audit Assistance Service. For more information, call 888-870-7227 toll-free, or visit www.paasnational.com.

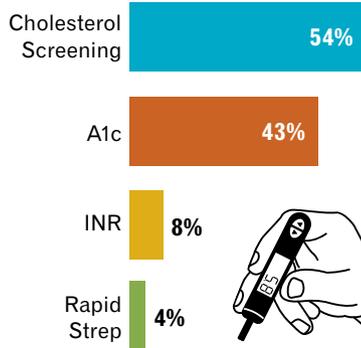




Independent Pharmacy Today



Point-of-Care Testing



Source: 2015 NCPA Digest, sponsored by Cardinal Health



ADVOCACY ALERT

- NCPA raised member concerns about **shutoffs of needed medications**, long-term care issues, and constructive transfer in recent sessions with Drug Enforcement Administration section chiefs.
- While progress is being made, there are still too many Part D plans that are outliers relating to access to preferred cost sharing and lower copays for beneficiaries, NCPA has told the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). NCPA continues to encourage Medicare officials to implement an **any willing pharmacy** requirement and urge Congress to enact it legislatively, as H.R. 793 and S. 1190 would do.
- NCPA has urged CMS to thoroughly review the Part D bidding process and require more complete and accurate information related to preferred cost sharing pharmacies on its Plan Finder. In addition, preferred network **plans should incur a financial penalty** or other sanction if drugs are more expensive at preferred pharmacies after considering abusive direct and indirect remuneration fees (DIRs).

