Expanding Patient Care

Year Three Progress Report | August 2013–July 2014

PAMA Pharmacists Advancing Medication Adherence

NCPA®
NATIONAL COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION
Table of Contents

Patient Care ................................................... 02
Public Policy and Research ..................... 03
Pharmacy Operations .............................. 04
Pharmacy Education ............................... 05

For more information about the PAMA initiative, contact adherence@ncpanet.org.

The PAMA initiative was developed by NCPA and is supported by unrestricted funding from:

[Logos for Cardinal Health, MERCK, and Pfizer]
Medication non-adherence—everything from skipping doses to not filling or refilling prescriptions—has enormous health consequences. It is estimated to cost the U.S. health care system $290 billion annually in avoidable expenses. But the toll on patients and their families—the avoidable physical and mental pain—is almost unimaginable.

As the most trusted, accessible medication experts, community pharmacists are ideally positioned to help address medication adherence. Pharmacists are a key touch point throughout the continuum of care and are the last health care professional seen by patients before they are supposed to start taking a medication for a week, a month, or a lifetime.

NCPA is continuing its commitment to adherence through its Pharmacists Advancing Medication Adherence (PAMA) initiative by working in collaboration with organizations and stakeholders committed to advancing and enhancing patient medication adherence.

PAMA Vision: By 2015, actions taken by community pharmacists will result in improvement in medication adherence rates.

PAMA Goal: Influence community pharmacists to recognize and provide adherence services as a core component of the profession making it as equally important as dispensing and counseling.

Over the last three years, we have made significant strides with the PAMA program. We have demonstrated pharmacy’s value in improving chronic care management through medication synchronization programs. We have provided pharmacy educators with tools to enable new pharmacy graduates to tackle medication adherence. We are actively engaging with policymakers, consumer groups, and other stakeholders on pharmacists’ role in managing medications. These efforts are highlighted in the following pages and help to showcase the four areas of PAMA focus:

• Patient Care
• Pharmacy Education
• Pharmacy Operations
• Public Policy

As we look forward, we continue to seek ways to build on PAMA’s successes and find new strategies and methods to use the bond between pharmacists and their patients to improve and measure health outcomes that increased adherence can bring.

We’d like to thank our current PAMA sponsors, Cardinal Health Foundation, Merck, and Pfizer, for their support, and we welcome you to join our effort to advance medication adherence as a path to better patient health.

B. Douglas Hoey, Pharmacist, MBA
NCPA Chief Executive Officer
The Win-Win-Win of Medication Synchronization

National hockey league great Wayne Gretzky once said, “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.” To put it in the context of medication non-adherence, if patients don’t take their medications or take them inappropriately, they will fail to achieve the desired outcomes.

Medication synchronization (med sync) is the process of aligning all of a patient’s medications to be refilled on the same day. Patients will make a single trip to the pharmacy to pick up prescriptions each month, making it convenient to stay on track with their long-term medications. Besides benefitting patients and pharmacies, med sync can help reduce overall health care costs by making a dent in the costs associated with non-adherence, which are estimated to be as high as $290 billion a year.

In 2011, NCPA developed Simplify My Meds® to help pharmacists boost their patients’ medication adherence while also improving pharmacy operations. The Simplify My Meds program continues to gain acceptance among independent pharmacies. Currently, some 2,000 of them have implemented the program. In addition, 47% of all independent pharmacists offer med sync services. As of July 2014, more than 65,000 patients are now enrolled. Clearly, med sync is a key ingredient to improved adherence and also provides a solid foundation on which pharmacies can build a portfolio of additional patient care services including immunizations, MTM, diabetes education, and point-of-care testing.

Consumer Focus Groups Provide Valuable Insight

To better understand patient barriers and consumers’ thoughts and attitudes about refill synchronization, NCPA held online and live consumer focus groups in fall 2013. Both provided valuable consumer insight into benefits of med sync, perceived barriers, and feedback on current and draft Simplify My Meds marketing materials.
Support for Sync Picks up Steam in the States

Despite the benefits of med sync, patients and pharmacies still face several challenges when trying to synchronize all of a patient’s prescriptions. A ‘short fill’ or partial fill is often needed to align the patient’s medications to a single refill date. Currently, many payers do not have payment policies in place to provide coverage for a claim for less than a 30-day supply. Therefore, patients are required to pay a full month’s copayment or coinsurance for a month’s supply of medications, even if questions remain as to the effectiveness or adverse impacts of that medication on that patient.

To alleviate these barriers to patient health, NCPA has developed model legislation for state legislators to consider. During the 2014 legislative sessions, 13 states introduced med sync legislation, with legislation enacted in Colorado, Utah, and Oregon. The legislative activity during this past session suggests that state legislatures are beginning to recognize medication synchronization as a tool that can improve adherence when patients are on a chronic medication regimen. NCPA will continue to monitor and support this initiative in the states looking ahead to the 2015 legislative session.

Network Pilot Posed to Show Pharmacies’ Collective Impact

In May, NCPA, in collaboration with the Arkansas Pharmacists Association, launched the first of its kind adherence network study. The pilot program sponsored by Pfizer aims to prove community pharmacies’ collective impact on medication adherence. More than 70 pharmacies operating on more than 10 different pharmacy management systems are connected through a common platform that helps pharmacists manage med sync patients. The project, set to be completed in 2015, will be a scalable demonstration of how community pharmacies can come together to form a virtual adherence network, improving pharmacy quality for their patients.

Opportunity for Accountable Care

NCPA continues to proactively seek opportunities to advocate for pharmacist-provided adherence services to patients, consumer or payer groups, and consumer media. After learning about the benefits of med sync, a medical society expressed interest in incorporating the process into three accountable care organizations in which they have ownership. NCPA is currently working to connect and support Simplify My Meds pharmacies for this endeavor.
Pharmacy Operations

America’s Pharmacist Addresses Adherence

For the third consecutive year, NCPA dedicated the June issue of America’s Pharmacist to medication adherence. Topics include an introduction to Medicare Part D Star Ratings, highlights from the 2013 National Report Card on Adherence, and medication adherence success stories.

In addition, America’s Pharmacist continues to showcase ways pharmacists can incorporate adherence activities in their practices throughout the year in the monthly column, “Adherence: It Only Takes a Minute.” Counseling tools and techniques, patient care services, and clinical interventions were among the topics published. NCPA also makes these articles available to members via the NCPA website and to state pharmacy associations for publication in their newsletters and magazines.

According to the most recent community pharmacy census, 67% of independent community pharmacies offer some form of adherence services. Nearly half of all community pharmacies are providing med sync.

Peer-to-Peer Learning at 2013 Adherence Institute

Pharmacists and technicians alike had the opportunity to learn from their peers during a special track of adherence programming at the 115th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in Orlando, Fla. The NCPA Adherence Institute sponsored by Merck put pharmacists on the right path to improving patient adherence, driving better outcomes, and improving the pharmacy’s bottom line.

Nearly 500 people attended at least one of the sessions, which included continuing education programming, a Simplify My Meds users group, and a roundtable on med sync technologies.

Continuing Education Symposium Offers Solutions

At a special adherence-themed lunch symposium, pharmacists learned why non-adherence has become such a large part of the health care discussion and how community pharmacies are stepping in to offer solutions to the epidemic. NCPA CEO Douglas Hoey presented key points from the National Report Card on Medication Adherence followed by an up-close look at three unique pharmacy practices to see how they are pioneering new approaches to the adherence issue. The presentation was recorded and converted to a web-based continuing education program available at www.pharmacistelink.com.

New Post Convention Program Looks to the Future

At the 116th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in Austin, Texas, NCPA will offer the first “Networking for High-Performance Pharmacies” session. This special post-convention event will give pharmacists an opportunity to engage with private and public payers, learn about pay-for-performance plans and quality-related and network inclusion criteria. Like-minded pharmacists will have the opportunity to get to know each other and learn from each other, thereby possibly facilitating the formation of future networks. It will, in essence, be a forum for these progressive individuals to rethink pharmacy.
NCPA Awards Adherence All-Stars

In 2012, NCPA created two new annual awards to increase awareness of the importance of medication adherence and recognize pharmacists who are among its leading advocates. In recognition of their commitment to improving medication adherence, Steve Adkins and Ashley Ellis were honored at the National Community Pharmacists Association’s 115th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in Orlando, Fla.

Health Profession Students Partnering Together to Improve Adherence

NCPA continues to support the National Consumers League’s Script Your Future Medication Adherence Team Challenge as a committed partner. Working on interdisciplinary teams, students raised awareness and improved understanding about medication adherence through community outreach during the 2014 Challenge.

National winning campaigns included those from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine School of Pharmacy, St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Touro University California College of Pharmacy, Northeast Ohio Medical University College of Pharmacy, and University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Pharmacy. The recognized schools’ campaigns were selected among nearly 50 applications and 109 participating educational institutions.

More than 2,200 future health professionals held 300 events in 26 states and the District of Columbia, counseling more than 9,300 patients and reaching more than 6 million consumers nationwide during the 2014 Challenge.

Adherence Toolkit Being Used by Pharmacy Associations, Colleges and Blogs

In 2013, NCPA released the Medication Adherence Educators Toolkit. This workbook was developed jointly with the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) and features teaching tools to help prepare student pharmacists to detect, monitor, and improve medication adherence. NCPA distributed the toolkits to the deans, curriculum chairs, pharmacy practice chairs, and other stakeholders at pharmacy schools nationwide.

Many pharmacy schools have been able to adapt key activities to teach in the curriculum at their schools. Some of the feedback received includes:

“Many items in the toolkit will fit in our course and already are there. We believe some of the activities we don’t do may fit in the Am Care Track elective also. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to review. We look forward to incorporating these activities.”

“The examples of adherence aids were a perfect addition to our lecture, ‘Helping Patients Manage Therapeutic Regimens.’”

“Our course focuses on having the students write SMART goals for themselves and how they want their communication skills to improve over the course of their schooling. This document discusses helping patients set SMART goals. A great idea, indeed.”
The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA®) represents the interests of America’s community pharmacists, including the owners of nearly 23,000 independent community pharmacies. Together they represent an $88.8 billion health care marketplace, dispense nearly 40% of all retail prescriptions, and employ more than 300,000 individuals, including over 62,000 pharmacists. Independent community pharmacists are readily accessible medication experts who can help lower health care spending. To learn more, go to www.ncpanet.org.