

Highlights from MedHere Today

A Medication Adherence Success Story

L & S Pharmacy, Charleston, MO

“ANY TIME YOU FOLLOW UP WITH PATIENTS, YOU HAVE A POSITIVE OUTCOME.”

—Richard Logan, Jr. PharmD

In 2006, Richard and Tripp Logan of L & S Pharmacy wanted to do something that would allow them more patient contact time and follow-up care with their patients. They knew such a plan would be beneficial for their patients and they suspected that it would be beneficial for the financial well-being of their pharmacy. They tested a few different ideas and one program that flourished was an adherence program within their delivery service. Simply put, patients sign up for a program called MedHere Today™ and they receive scheduled phone calls from the pharmacy staff to confirm their medication refill(s) and discuss if they need any OTCs, supplies etc. Prior to each call, the pharmacist does a patient chart review which enables them to address any notable issues during the conversation. The meds are then delivered free of charge to the patient. This type of medication adherence program has had an overwhelmingly positive response from patients and the program has continued to grow. Special emphasis is placed on patients with diabetes, hypertension, and HIV.

The satisfaction of helping patients obtain their medications is further buoyed by increased adherence by patients and the financial reward to the pharmacy. L & S has done an in-depth analysis of the numbers and they are impressive.

The objective of the analysis was to review persistence and adherence rates and pharmacy margins over a 360 day period before and after patients were enrolled in the program. A total of 112 patients enrolled in the program from March 2008 - October 2009 and pharmacy data was reviewed over a 57 month period (January 2006 - September 2010). Here's what they found:

Study highlights:

- The study examined six therapeutic drug classes based on prescription volume.
- **Persistence:** The average number of days staying on medication was higher for all drug classes (**increase of 38.6 days**).
 - The proportion of patients staying on their medication for an entire year was also higher for all drug classes (**increase of 12.4%**).
- **Adherence—MPR:** The medication possession ratio (MPR) is a common adherence measurement. It is the supply of medicine that a patient has, divided by the number of days between refills. In this study it was higher in the post-intervention period for all six drug classes (**increase of 6.6%**).
- **Margin:** There were 100 and 112 patients included in the pre and post-intervention analysis, respectively. Approximately **30% more prescriptions were dispensed** in the post-intervention sub-group, which helps account for the increase in overall margin. In addition to expanded prescription volume, the margin per prescription increased in the post-intervention period (**\$1.87 mean prescription margin**).

Prior to the start of the analysis, the Logans were confident that the MedHere Today adherence program was helping patients be more adherent and persistent and they knew inherently that refills conducted on time could possibly improve the bottom line. What they didn't know was how much success they were having in real numbers as highlighted above.

Adherence Impact Calculator: Making the Business Case

NCPA created an adherence calculator (www.ncpanet.org/adherencecalculator) to help pharmacists determine the changes in gross profit for a pharmacy after encouraging a higher medication adherence rate. The following example uses the calculator with a real-life scenario taken from the L & S Pharmacy report discussed above.

The report highlights the improvement made by pharmacists on medication adherence using a refill synchronization model. The business case below is based on real data from this report to demonstrate the benefit of a medication synchronization program on gross profit margins.

IMPACT OF THE MEDHERE TODAY PROGRAM ON PERSISTENCE AND ADHERENCE

Calculator inputs

Gross profit per prescription: \$13.80 (2010 national average)

Number of different drugs prescribed per average patient for chronic conditions: 1

(In this study, any patient with at least one prescription for a medication during the time period was included)

Number of days it takes the average non-adherent patient to refill a 30 day medication: 38

(Adherence rates of the Top 6 cohort before intervention was averaged at 38)

Number of existing patients recruited each business day to join an adherence program: 0.2

(On average, the pharmacy enrolled approximately 6 patients per month in the program or 0.2 patients per day)

Calculator results

Without an adherence program, each patient over the next 12 months represents a potential gross profit of \$11.50 at 1 month, \$69.00 at 6 months and **\$138.00** at 12 months, before tax.

With an adherence program, each patient measured over a 12 month time frame represents a gross profit to the pharmacy before tax of \$14.95 at 1 month, \$89.70 at 6 months and **\$179.40** at 12 months.

Sample Business Case

Assume that there are 73 patients each on an average of 1 different chronic medication. Without an adherence program, these patients over the next 12 months will bring in \$10,074.00 in gross profit.

If the pharmacy has an adherence program and is able to recruit 6 patients each month and once recruited the patients practice maximum adherence so that each patient refills all their chronic medications every month, then starting today, over the next 12 months these adherent patients will bring in \$11,357.40 in gross profit.

The increase in gross profit would be **\$1,283.40** greater than what would occur under current adherence practices.

The **long term increase in gross profit** that would result in promoting maximum adherence for just 6 patients each month would be **\$5,161.20 over 2 years** and **\$32,258.88 over 5 years**.