

# What is Specialty Pharmacy?

A specialty pharmacy is a state-licensed pharmacy that solely or largely provides medications for people living with serious health conditions requiring complex therapies. These may include:

- Cancer
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hemophilia/other bleeding disorders
- Hepatitis
- HIV/AIDS
- Human growth hormone deficiencies
- Multiple sclerosis
- Organ transplantation
- Rheumatoid arthritis

Along with being state-licensed and regulated, specialty pharmacies are accredited or in process of accreditation by independent third parties such as the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC), the Center for Pharmacy Practice Accreditation (CPPA), the Joint Commission and URAC Accreditation demonstrates commitment to quality, safety, accountability and adoption of nationally recognized standards of practice.

A **specialty drug** is more complex than most prescription medications and can be a biologic or traditional drug. The complexity of these medications may be due to the drug itself, the way it is administered, the management of its side effect profile, the disease or condition it is used to treat, special access conditions required by the manufacturer, payer authorization or benefit requirements, patient financial hardship or any combination of these.

## The Patient-Centric Model

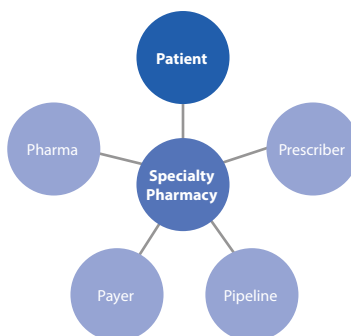
A specialty pharmacy's model is designed to provide a comprehensive and coordinated model of care for patients diagnosed with chronic illnesses and complex medical conditions, achieve superior clinical and economic outcomes, and expedite patient access to care.

Specialty pharmacies connect patients who are severely ill with the medications that are prescribed for their conditions, provide the patient care services that are required for these medications, and support patients who are facing reimbursement challenges

for these life changing and often times life saving, but also frequently costly medications.

These unique pharmacies provide services that include training on how to use these medications, comprehensive treatment assessment, patient monitoring, and frequent communication with caregivers and the patient's physician or other healthcare providers.

The expert services that specialty pharmacies provide drive adherence and persistency, proper management of medication dosing and side effects, and ensure appropriate medication use. A high performing specialty pharmacy intersects at the "5 Ps":



## Specialty Pharmacy Utilization

While the overall use of specialty medications is less than 2% of the US population, specialty drugs accounted for 24% of US drug spend in 2010, 37% in 2015, and projected to reach 50% by 2020. With the average monthly cost being \$2500-\$3500, complexities associated with the management of these diseases and their medications, and the increased focus on specialty drug development for ultra-orphan and orphan disease states, specialty pharmacy has become the new pharmacy.

Health plans, pharmacy benefit managers, and government payers have turned their focus to the management of these patients and medications, and it is imperative that pharmacy stakeholders are educated on, and are exposed to the nuances of specialty pharmacy, the capabilities and competencies

required of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support staff in this field, and the professional opportunities afforded by this distinct and unique practice setting.

## Who is NASP?

The National Association of Specialty Pharmacy is a 501(c)(6) non-profit trade organization and is the only national association representing all stakeholders in the specialty pharmacy industry. The mission of NASP is to elevate the practice of specialty pharmacy by developing and promoting continuing professional education and certification of specialty pharmacists, while advocating for public policies that ensure patients have appropriate access to specialty medications in tandem with critical services. The association provides an online education center offering accredited continuing pharmacy education programs, hosts an annual meeting that offers education sessions and continuing education credits, and is the only organization that offers a certification program for specialty pharmacists.

NASP members include the nation's leading independent specialty pharmacies, pharmaceutical and biotechnology manufacturers, group purchasing organizations, patient advocacy groups, integrated delivery systems and health plans, technology and data management vendors, wholesalers/distributors and practicing pharmacists. With over 100 corporate members and 1,200 individual members, NASP is the unified voice of specialty pharmacy in the United States.

**Specialty pharmacy is...the new pharmacy.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit [www.naspsnet.org](http://www.naspsnet.org).  
All questions and comments can be emailed to [info@naspsnet.org](mailto:info@naspsnet.org).