

Specialty Pharmacy of the Year Award

Atrium Health is a nationally recognized leader in shaping outcomes through innovative research, education, and compassionate care. Our integrated, nonprofit health system is nearly 70,000 teammates, serving patients at 40+ hospitals and 1,400+ care locations in three states. We are recognized for our holistic approach to integrating specialty pharmacy through established pathways. Several new 2020 initiatives align with NASP's mission to advance the role of specialty pharmacy in high-quality healthcare. One example of this was our pilot where specialty pharmacists contacted myelofibrosis patients prior to physician appointments to evaluate symptoms and complete disease state scoring, significantly improving utilization of validated tools at our institution. This practice was recognized as a Positive Quality Intervention by NCODA and featured at the ASH annual meeting. Comprehensive clinical services through specialty pharmacists were expanded from oncology patients who fill internally to all Atrium patients, resulting in 1,225 interventions related to appropriate prescribing of oral chemotherapy in 2020, and 975 so far in 2021. Pharmacists established a Cancer Coagulation Clinic to provide recommendations for VTE management in cancer patients, a service not known to exist in specialty programs. The quality of our program earned Atrium Health an oncology distinction during our 2021 ACHC re-accreditation. As stewards of specialty medications our pharmacists were established on 9 system-level subject matter expert committees to educate and advise stakeholders on initiatives including formulary additions, research and outcomes, and protocol design. We participated in 34 publications, posters (including a 2020 NASP winner) and CE presentations in 2020.

Through the establishment of high touch services including prior authorization, financial assistance, and clinical support programs we have continuously maintained high performance in defined metrics since our program received its first accreditation in 2014. Our rate of complaints has been less than 1% since the program's inception and was 0.35% in 2020, all successfully resolved within 24 hours. Our pursuit of excellence in patient communication is demonstrated by 95% of calls being answered within 30 seconds, abandonment rates well below 2% every year, and excellent adherence rates which improved from 87% in 2017 to 94% in 2020 in our overall population.

To enhance our quality program this year we established a new subcommittee including a rotating roster of front-line teammates to ensure a variety of subject matter experts are contributing to rigorous process improvement and optimal program design to improve efficiency, quality, and safety for all specialty pharmacy activities. To date we have formalized over 30 operational quality improvement projects, including 4 new initiatives in 2021. One innovative project

integrates specialty pharmacist workflow with electronic treatment plans, allowing pharmacists to evaluate and intervene on clinical concerns prior to prescription generation utilizing direct provider to pharmacist communication channels. This removes preexisting barriers that delay turn-around-times, and allow for faster, more accurate resolution of clinical concerns.

Atrium Health Specialty Pharmacy Service has achieved a high level of patient satisfaction of greater than 95% and net promotor scores greater than 80 every year since our initial 2016 patient survey cycle with SullivanLuallin.

Customer comments provide direction on the patient care opportunities our specialty pharmacy can make an impact on with each interaction. Our team recognized obstacles patients were encountering to secure supportive care products including anti-diarrhea medications, moisturizing creams, alcohol swabs, pen needles, glucose machines and testing strips to name a few. Adherence and proper use of devices was not optimized for some patients who could neither afford nor had the ability to obtain these products. Our specialty team began a program to supply the ancillary products to our patients, free of charge, and we included them with their specialty medication delivery. Adherence and patient satisfaction improved after the quality improvement process was implemented as 100% of patients received these products as part of our standard of care.

Our commitment to the experience of our customers extends to the internal and community-based provider practices that we serve, ensuring clinical teams have the resources that they need to get patients on, and keep them on their specialty medications. This is reflected in achieving 98% or greater on our provider satisfaction surveys since SullivanLuallin began administering our surveys in 2018.

As an integrated health-system we are accountable to all Atrium patients and providers regardless of our ability to dispense their medication. Our technicians and financial coordinators facilitate all benefit investigations, prior authorizations, and coordination of appeals. Working with providers, they ensure specialty medications are appropriately prescribed in consideration of payer formularies. They also assist all patients with enrollment in copay assistance, grant, manufacturer assistance programs, and indigent clinic pharmacies, ensuring every avenue is exhausted for patients with un-affordable copays. If grant funds are closed, the team monitors continuously to secure funds for individual patients as soon as they become available. Patients also have options to enroll in a monthly repayment program to pay their pharmacy bills on a customized schedule that meets their needs. Patients who cannot fill internally are transferred to their external pharmacies with clean prescriptions and financial assistance established, preventing delays in therapy initiation for all system patients. In 2020 we secured over \$81 million dollars in copay and manufacturer assistance for our patients ensuring high rates of access and affordability. Clinical interventions performed by specialty pharmacists directly

impacted costs to our payers through the prevention of filling specialty drugs in an inappropriate manner. The process of thorough clinical review of prescribed regimens, dose adjustment recommendations based on patient specific factors such as labs, direct pharmacy to provider communication in the EMR, and chart reviews prior to contacting patients yielded an average of \$106,000.00 per week in cost savings to payers.

Atrium Health has participated as NASP members for the past 6 years and have served on several committees including the Clinical Outcomes Committee, Education Committee, Health System Steering Committee, and Policy Council. Additionally, specialty pharmacy teammates have volunteered their time and expertise to multiple specialty pharmacy associated organizations and committees including the ASHP Section of Specialty Pharmacy Practitioners, the CPPA Specialty Pharmacy Advisory Group, HOPA, ASTCT, and NCODA. Our participation within our industry can also be highlighted by our representation and active engagement in speaking at national conferences and publications, including NASP, Asembia, CBI Informa, World Congress, Trellis Insights, and HOPA.

Atrium Health is committed to preventing financial toxicity and improving care outcomes through special programs designed to benefit underserved populations in our care. This work is exemplified in our partnered efforts within our sickle cell community highlighted at [www.Sickle Cell Disease](http://www.SickleCellDisease.com), Part4: An Integrated Pharmacy Model-YouTube. Volunteer participation also includes working for multiple charities in the provision of food, clothing, school supplies, literacy, medications and medical supplies, COVID vaccine clinics, elderly assistance, and a variety of efforts in community schools. Teammates also participate in fundraising for multiple philanthropic organizations such as the National Hemophilia Foundation, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, American Cancer Society, and our own Atrium Health Foundation.

These accomplishments are multiplied by our system alliance with Wake Forest Baptist Health, now caring for approximately 10 million patients together.

The Specialty Pharmacy Service at Atrium Health is committed to growing our business in the spirit of the defining mission of our organization: to Improve Health, Elevate Hope, and Advance Healing for All. In this effort, we strive to be at the forefront of innovative, high-quality, and compassionate services that meet the individual wants and needs of each unique patient. The journey from our humble beginnings in 2010 to the suite of 18 service lines that we offer today has been nothing but an absolute pleasure thanks to the invaluable lessons learned from our engaged patients, providers, and specialty pharmacy community partners, such as NASP and its members, who constantly inspire us to never stop pursuing excellence in all areas.