How Specialty Pharmacy Enhances The Patient Experience

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Problem / Question

How can a specialty pharmacy create an environment where providing the highest level of care and service to our patients maximizes their experience and improves adherence and compliance to complicated therapies.

Objectives

- How to demonstrate that metric measuring, review and action plans can improve the patient experience with regards managing medications with high levels of financial and clinical toxicities.

Project Overview

- To be able to become a leader in the specialty oncology pharmacy business, AON pharmacy continually strives to develop processes to make sure we provide the highest level of service to our patients.
- In order to make sure we continually meet the standards we set AON has implemented various metrics to assure we are achieving our goals.
- These metrics include: PDC, turnaround time, approval times and patient satisfaction survey scores
- These metrics are monitored continually and reviewed quarterly to see if improvements/revisions need to be made.

PDC

- Proportion of Days Covered (PDC) is the preferred method to measure medication adherence
- PDC calculations include the # of days 'covered'/# of days in period X100%
- The higher the PDC demonstrates that a patient has medication available to take when they need to take it. Generally, a PDC score >80% demonstrates the likelihood of achieving the most clinical benefit
- AON pharmacy monitors PDC for its patients who are receiving maintenance oral oncolytics. AON pharmacy's clinical team robustly and proactively contact patients, ascertain they are taking their meds as prescribed, account for how many doses are remaining on hand, and schedule their next fill accordingly.

Turnaround Time

- Turnaround time measures the total time, in business days, it takes for a prescription to arrive at the pharmacy until the time it is available for a patient to receive.
- The shorter the total turnaround time = the faster a patient can get on therapy.
- In specialty pharmacy, measuring turnaround time is vital due to so many aspects of getting a prescription available (i.e., prior authorizations, financial assistance, etc.)
- AON Pharmacy continually measures turnaround time for each step of our processes in addition to total turnaround time to evaluate our workflows/staffing to assure we are providing the highest, most efficient level of service to our patients

Time To Approval (Insurance)

- Due to the high cost of the oral oncolytics we dispense, most Rxs that we receive require prior authorization from the patient's Rx insurance plan
- AON technicians will investigate the patient's insurance benefit, submit a test claim, then work with the prescriber to initiate and submit a prior authorization.
- As a medically integrated pharmacy, AON staff have access to the patients medical EMR, which assists our team to obtain MD notes, labs, pathologies, etc. to expedite the PA process
- AON technicians follow up on PA status daily until approved, notifying the patient and prescriber of the status along the way

Time To Approval (Financial)

- Often, when a drug is approved by the patient's insurance, they are faced with a financial toxicity that can preclude them from accessing the prescription
- At an average price of $15,000/month, most Med D plans, after the patient pays for their deductible, coinsurance and gap, are still left with a catastrophic benefit of 5% = $750/month, which is out of most patient's range of affordability.
- AON Pharmacy technicians will contact the patient, review the drug and patient financials, and seek out sources of assistance to remove that financial barrier to getting on therapy
- Options include grants/fundings, copay cards, LIS, free drug programs from manufacturers
- AON Pharmacy technicians will work with the patient and prescriber to get forms completed and submitted, then follow up daily until approval.

Patient Satisfaction

- As a specialty oncology pharmacy, our patients are all living with cancer of varying stages.
- Most of our patients have already been through chemotherapy, are of advanced age, suffer from comorbidities and have been through a great deal emotionally, physically and financially
- AON Pharmacy places our primary goal on providing the highest level of care, compassion and service to our patients, who often require an elevated level of service needed in community pharmacy settings.
- To measure how well we are performing, AON pharmacy runs daily phone surveys to measure how well we are servicing our patients
- Anytime a patient provides a negative survey result, one of our pharmacy technicians contacts the patient to discuss and potentially resolve any issues they may be having.

Results

- Creating and measuring metrics is the best way for AON pharmacy to assure we are providing the highest level of service to our patients.
- Our goals is not to meet/exceed standards for accreditation purposes, our goal is to maximize scores in every aspect to make sure our pharmacy is doing the best they can to treat our patients.
- Results:
  - PDC: 93%
  - Turnaround time   2.7 days
  - Time to approval   1.5 days (insurance), 3 days (financial)
  - Patient satisfaction 95.3%

Conclusion

- Specialty pharmacies must develop workflows to manage complicated, costly prescriptions. Specialty pharmacies are in the best position to maximize care while minimizing the time to get on therapy
- Developing and monitoring metrics assure pharmacies are meeting accreditation requirements and providing the service patients need to access these therapies
- AON pharmacy is triple specialty pharmacy accredited (URAC, ACHC, NABP) demonstrating we meet the rigorous standards required to provide an elevated level of service to patients
- AON pharmacy continually monitors our metrics and hold ourselves to the highest standards in reviewing and implementing workflows/staffing/technology needed to assure we are providing the highest level of care and service to our patients

Works Cited

PQAalliance.org