

Meeting the Sophisticated Needs of Rare Disease Non-Commercial Pharmacy Management



Impact of Increased Specialty Medication Pricing

In 2019, there was a record-breaking number of specialty medication approvals, with 39 new drugs approved by the FDA. These included 18 new cancer therapies and 10 novel drugs to treat rare conditions, 5 new drugs to treat HIV, 3 drugs for thrombocytopenia, a new biologic for psoriasis, and an oral medication for rheumatoid arthritis¹. Aligned with the continued expansion of the specialty pharmacy market, specialty medication prices are expected to continually rise. It has been reported that prices for specialty drugs were found to increase an average of 9.6% between 2014 and 2015, which was the highest increase observed since 2006². It is also projected that from 2018 to 2020, specialty drug costs will grow from 39% to 48% of the overall pharmacy benefit spend³. As a direct correlation to these drug pricing trends, the development of life-altering therapies does not present without its financial barriers. These burdens ultimately have direct impact on the patient's ability to start and continue on therapy.

Overcoming Financial Burdens

Recognizing the importance of access to life-altering therapies and understanding the financial barriers that may be encountered, manufacturers have launched free goods programs including bridge, quick start, and patient assistance programs as means to ensure timely dispensing and medication accessibility to patients. These manufacturer programs allow for rapid medication access while bypassing financial burdens. A strong working relationship with the manufacturer to facilitate bridge dispensing can minimize therapy gaps for patients who are uninsured, under-insured or awaiting insurance approval. To streamline the dispensing of these manufacturer provided products directly to patients in need, non-commercial pharmacies have been developed to service this population.

Streamlining Free Medication Dispenses: The Role of Non-Commercial Pharmacies

Non-commercial pharmacies serve as the liaison between the manufacturer and the patient to coordinate medication dispensing at no cost. These pharmacies function within the capabilities of a commercial pharmacy, however, the prescription dispensing process is streamlined and bypasses any insurance limitations that are normally facilitated with a commercial dispense. High-touch patient outreach and involvement are top priority for these pharmacies to ensure the patients understand the services offered and receive educational support throughout the duration of their free medication dispensing. As specialty medications develop and manufacturers continue to provide free medication support for patients, there is the need to simplify dispensing processes for free medications to alleviate burdens on the manufacturer and the patient all while providing unmatched patient care excellence.

Increased Non-Commercial Pharmacy Needs in Rare Pharmacy

The financial burdens for patients receiving therapy for rare and devastating conditions are in many cases grave, as it was estimated that the average annual cost per patient in 2016 for an orphan drug was \$140,443⁴. The importance of free medication dispensing is evident, as a patient receiving an orphan therapy may endure many insurance barriers. A survey of payers reported that 97 percent of orphan drugs will require prior authorizations, 55 percent will be placed on a specialty tier, and 27 percent required the imposition of edits. In addition, 25 percent of payers may require an increase in cost sharing with patients⁵.

A New & Sophisticated Non-Commercial Pharmacy with a Rare Focus

Recognizing these needs and having extensive experience within rare diseases, RareMed Solutions decided to launch a non-commercial specialty pharmacy focused on the complex needs of rare disease patient populations in 2018. RareMed's non-commercial pharmacy is licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and currently dispenses products for patient assistance (PAP), bridge, free trial, and dose exchange programs. With its primary facility located only minutes from the Pittsburgh International Airport, RareMed is able to deliver treatment to patients next-day if processed prior to the close of business. RareMed utilizes technology platforms to offer extensive reporting capabilities normally only offered by the most sophisticated specialty pharmacies.

Customized High-Touch Patient Contact

RareMed recognizes the need for customized clinical solutions, white glove treatment, and sophisticated technology tailored to each rare disease patient population. This approach eliminates gap days and ensures patients are staying on therapy. Programs at RareMed vary across numerous therapeutic areas within rare disease, including neurology and oncology products. These services include the utilization of in-house technology through our SWFT™ platform, sophisticated data reporting capabilities, and onsite visibility to the branded support programs that service as the manufacturer's patient services provider (PSP). "Our unique approach to the non-commercial pharmacy at RareMed delivers unmatched solutions needed for each one of our manufacturers and rare disease patient populations. The capabilities and customization of the pharmacy are unparalleled in the non-commercial pharmacy space. This approach allows our patients to stay comfortably on therapy until they are ready to transition back to a commercial specialty pharmacy." says Christa Eans, RareMed Solutions' pharmacy manager. The pharmacy at RareMed plans to continue to expand the number of programs they manage in 2020 and will offer cold-chain capabilities by the end of the year.

More About RareMed Solutions

RareMed Solutions is a national patient services provider headquartered in a brand new, technologically advanced facility in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. RareMed's PSP services include case management, co-pay, coupon, and financial assistance programs, reimbursement support, nursing support, healthcare professional education, patient adherence & education, and non-commercial pharmacy dispensing. The company has a breadth of experience developing and maintaining therapy-specific solutions that ensure unparalleled manufacturer & patient satisfaction. The company's undivided rare disease focus, high caliber associates, fully dedicated teams, and sophisticated proprietary technology enable it to meet the unique needs of its rare disease manufacturer partners.

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