



MANAGING MEDICATION MATTERS

IMPROVING MEDICATION ADHERENCE FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES
DELIVERS BETTER HEALTH AND LOWER COSTS

MANAGING MEDICATION MATTERS



POOR ADHERENCE CAN LEAD TO COMPLICATIONS FROM THE ILLNESS AND A LOWER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PATIENTS. COST OF MEDICATION NON-ADHERENCE IS \$290 BILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR IN THE U.S. ¹



As the cost of health care increases, employers are looking for new ways to improve outcomes and reduce costs. One way to improve outcomes and save money is to increase employee's medication adherence. Patients who adhere to their medication plans have increased productivity and better health outcomes, especially those patients with chronic health conditions.

Research also shows medication adherence reduces hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and provider office visits. Add all this up and the savings could be substantial.

WHAT IS MEDICATION ADHERENCE?

- Getting prescriptions filled
- Remembering to take medication on time
- Following prescription directions

WHY SHOULD MEDICATION ADHERENCE MATTER TO EMPLOYERS?

- Increased productivity from employees with certain chronic conditions
- Fewer missed days of work
- Reduced unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency department visits
- Improved employee health outcomes

COMMON BARRIERS TO MEDICATION ADHERENCE INCLUDE: ²

- Inability to pay for medications
- Side effects that make an individual feel different
- Belief that the treatment is unnecessary or not helping
- Difficult to keep up with multiple medications and complex dosing schedules
- Confusion on how and when to take the medication
- It's a reminder that something is wrong
- Begin to feel better

MANAGING MEDICATION MATTERS

ON ANY GIVEN DAY 50 PERCENT OF PATIENTS DO NOT TAKE THEIR PILLS AS PRESCRIBED OFTEN WITH SERIOUS HEALTH CONSEQUENCES AND AT AN ONEROUS COST TO SOCIETY.³

- DAVID ROSE

The costs of medication non-adherence are too high to avoid action. We have identified 6 actions employers can take to improve medication adherence. Employers can shape the benefits and programs they offer to remove barriers for their employees – whether cost, convenience, side effects, or lack of knowledge – to help them take their medications as prescribed.

SIX WAYS EMPLOYERS CAN IMPROVE MEDICATION ADHERENCE



USE DATA



EDUCATE



REDUCE COSTS



MAKE IT SIMPLE



INCREASE ACCESS



COMMUNICATE



THE VALUE OF MEDICATION ADHERENCE

The costs of medication non-adherence are too high to avoid action. By increasing rates of adherence among employees with certain chronic conditions, employers:

- Improve treatment outcomes
- Reduce lost work time
- Decrease the use of short-term disability (STD) among employees with diabetes, asthma/COPD, hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis, high cholesterol and multiple sclerosis
- Lessen sick-day absences for employees with diabetes, depression, hypertension, high cholesterol, coronary artery disease, and multiple sclerosis
- Reduce hospitalizations, and physician and emergency room visits
- Help employees keep up with scheduled preventive appointments

CASE STUDY: ROEBUCK MC ⁴

For every 100 diabetic patients who moved from non-adherence to adherence there were:

- 3 fewer hospitalizations
- 7 fewer ED visits

Medication adherence for patients with congestive heart failure, hypertension, diabetes, and dyslipidemia resulted in:

- Decreased hospital stays by 1.18-5.72 days
- Reduced net yearly medical costs for patients with:
 - ✓ \$7,827 for congestive heart failure
 - ✓ \$3,908 in hypertension
 - ✓ \$3,756 diabetes
 - ✓ \$1,258 dyslipidemia

DIABETIC EMPLOYEES WHO HAD THEIR MEDICATIONS 80% OF THE TIME EXPERIENCED
BETWEEN 2.8 AND 9.0 FEWER STD DAYS PER YEAR ⁵

10% INCREASE IN MEDICATION ADHERENCE AMONG 1,000 DIABETIC EMPLOYEES COULD
REDUCE LOST PRODUCTIVITY AND COSTS BY ABOUT \$370,000 ⁶



First employers should examine medical and pharmacy claims data to understand the scope of the problem. By identifying, gathering and reviewing claims data, you will know which conditions have the highest costs and if there are any complications or readmissions that are associated with not taking medication.

This data will highlight which conditions to target for medication adherence programs, as well as conditions that are associated to higher ER or readmissions rates with not taking medication. Having this information will help you, and your medical and pharmacy providers design targeted medication adherence efforts for certain conditions and situations.

Tackling medication adherence rates is becoming more of a priority for both pharmacies and health systems. Technology is helping gain increased visibility into patient profiles and medication adherence histories.

Employers should review trends over time to identify the interventions that will be most effective.

\$ REDUCE COSTS

REDUCE COSTS

- Work with your Pharmacy Benefits Manager (PBM) to manage the formulary.
- Provide resources to your employees, like [findtherightcare.org](https://www.findtherightcare.org) or [rxassist.org](https://www.rxassist.org) so they fully understand all their health care options.
- Give employees information on drug assistance programs, discount cards, pharmaceutical manufacturers' discount and assistance programs.
- Remind employees to work with their provider. Doctors may be able to prescribe a generic medication or offer other suggestions to offset the cost of a drug, including tablet splitting.
- Promote pharmacy price comparison tools, like GoodRx; RxSaver; and WellRx, with your employees

— “ —

GENERIC DRUGS USE THE SAME ACTIVE INGREDIENTS AND ARE SHOWN TO WORK IN THE BODY IN THE SAME WAY

BUT THEY CAN COST 30% TO 80% LESS.

GENERIC DRUGS ALSO HAVE THE SAME RISKS AND BENEFITS AS THEIR BRAND-NAME COUNTERPARTS. ⁷

— ” —

THE U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA) HAS PUT OUT A LIST OF “BEST PRACTICES FOR TABLET SPLITTING” ⁸

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL LIST](#)





INCREASE ACCESS

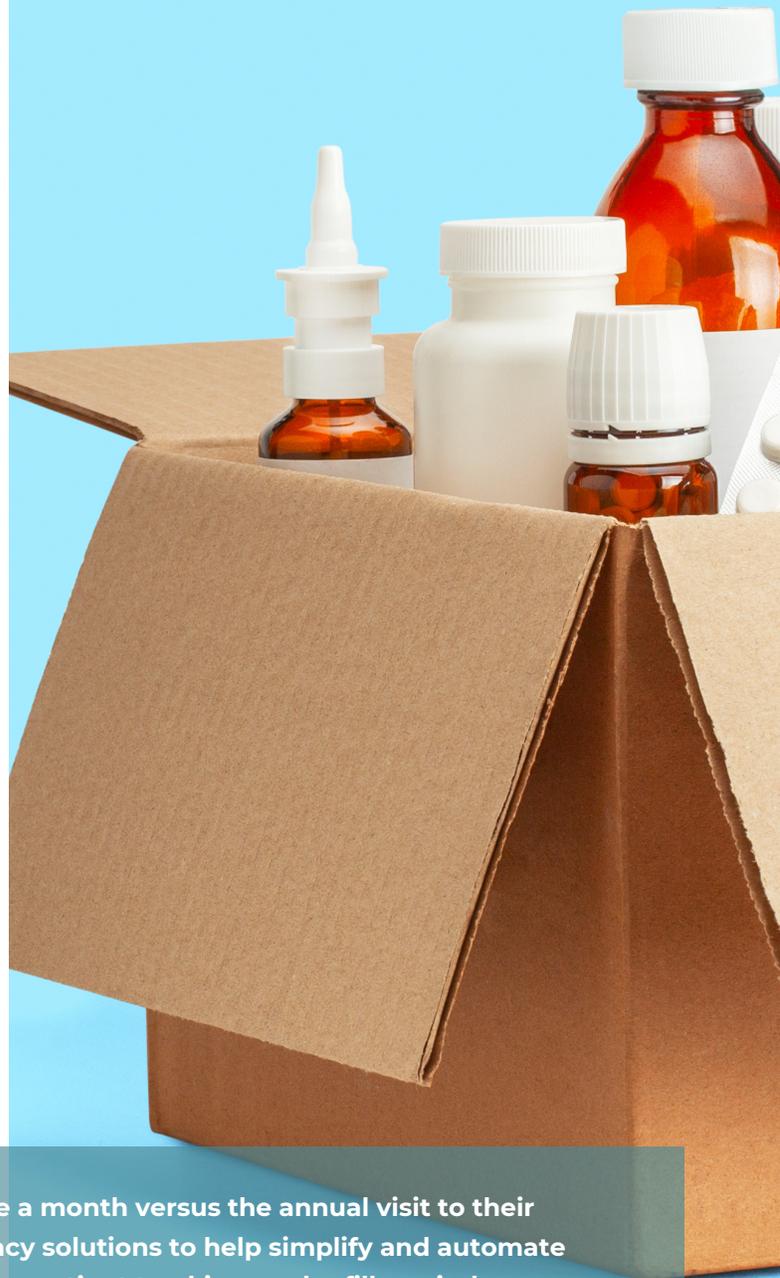
REDUCING REFILL BARRIERS

Getting refills can be a barrier for employees. Not only can waiting in line be a hassle, the process of figuring out direct mail delivery options, and sorting through different dosage schedules can be confusing and take a lot of time.

Reduce these barriers by helping employees decrease the number of trips to a pharmacy, get maintenance drugs filled at the same time, and have medications delivered straight to an employee's home.

Work with your pharmacy provider to offer employees online on-demand options from pharmacy vendors. Some companies deliver prescribed medications in convenient daily packages to a patient's home. This eliminates the burden of any type of medication prep and can help eliminate human error.

Many pharmacy retailers have on-demand delivery options for customers. This same-day delivery option is supplemented with 1-2-day delivery.



Many patients visit the pharmacy once a month versus the annual visit to their primary care doctor. Leverage pharmacy solutions to help simplify and automate mundane tasks like filling prescriptions, patient tracking, and refill reminders.



EDUCATE

A common reason for medication non-adherence is often the fear of adverse side effects or potential risks. Ensure your employees have credible information on what to expect and the benefits of medications. Your targeted medication adherence program should include education on why sticking with a medication regimen is a good idea.



HOST EDUCATIONAL FORUMS AND SESSIONS FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES

Use the data from high cost conditions and care settings, like the ER to identify themes for health and wellness gatherings online or at the office.

ASK A MEDICAL PROVIDER OR PHARMACIST TO PARTNER WITH YOU ON EMPLOYEE EDUCATION RELATED TO HEALTH CONDITIONS.

Most retail pharmacies and some community-based organizations, like the American Heart Association, offer free health and wellness educational programming. Invite employees to participate in their programs and services.

LINK YOUR EMPLOYEES WITH SYMPTOM CHECKER AND PROVIDER INFORMATION.

CLICK HERE TO FIND THE RIGHT CARE 



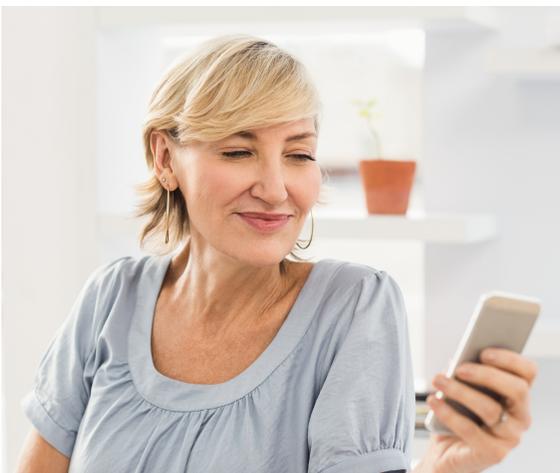
PHARMACISTS CONTINUE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED PROFESSIONALS IN THE U.S. SAYS GALLUP'S ANNUAL 2018 SURVEY.⁹





MAKE IT SIMPLE

To improve medication adherence, educate employees on ways to identify and adopt systems that remind them when it's time to take their medication. Identify and promote medication reminder programs with your employees.



- Create and offer educational materials on simple ways they can improve their medication adherence. Use flyers, payroll inserts, email messages with tips for employees on setting daily routines, keeping medication where it will be noticed, and maintaining a written or electronic schedule.
- Distribute plastic pill organizers or pocket calendars branded with your logo.
- Work with your pharmacy provider to share resources on high-tech pill organizers. These high-tech solutions include alarms that can be scheduled to go off at the recommended dosing times, containers that flash as a visual reminder to take medications and some that automatically dispense medication into a dosing cup at the correct time. Some pill containers can synchronize with applications on a smartphone to remind the user to take their medication. Additionally, these tools can help track if medications were taken and how frequently, as well as symptoms and side effects.
- Encourage employees to sign up for medication reminder programs based on their communication preferences (phone calls, email, mobile apps, text messaging). A multi-channel medication reminder program will yield better medication adherence, especially for employees with chronic health conditions.



MAKE IT SIMPLE



CASE STUDY: "NUDGING"¹⁰

One intervention that is currently in the works at Intermountain Medical Center Heart Institute focuses on the concept of ‘nudging’ using text-messaging messaging to remind patients to take their medication.. This Nobel-prize winning theory championed by economist Richard H. Thaler is currently being studied in a 12-month trial to improve medication adherence.



The FDA offers a form that your employees can print out and use for listing all of all of their medications.

Be an Active Member of Your Health Care Team

My Medicine Record

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Food and Drug Administration

Name (Last, First, Middle Initial): _____ Birth Date (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

	What I'm Using Rx – Brand & generic name; OTC – Name & active ingredients	What It Looks Like Color, shape, size, markings, etc.	How Much	How to Use / When to Use	Start / Stop Dates	Why I'm Using / Notes	Who Told Me to Use / How to Contact
— Enter ALL prescription (Rx) medicine (include samples), over-the-counter (OTC) medicine, and dietary supplements —							
Ex:	XXXX/xxxxxxxx	20 mg pill; small, white, round	40 mg; use two 20 mg pills	Take orally, 2 times a day, at 8:00 am & 8:00 pm	1-15-11	Lowers blood pressure; check blood pressure once a week; blood test on 4-15-11	Dr. X (800) 555-1212
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www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/ucm079489.htm (888) INFO-FDA www.fda.gov/usemedicinesafely These are my medicines as of (Enter date as mm/dd/yyyy): _____

FORM FDA 3664 (3/11) Page 1 of 4





COMMUNICATE

ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEES TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR PROVIDERS.

Give employees suggested questions to ask if medication side effects are bothering them. Remind them how important it is to talk with their doctor or pharmacist about what you can do to lessen the problem. Employees need to know their options, including switching to a different medication or adjusting the timing of a dose.



QUESTIONS THEY COULD ASK WHEN A NEW MEDICATION IS PRESCRIBED



Is the medication necessary?



Is it necessary to empty the bottle, or can I stop taking this medication once I feel better?



Will I need to get a refill, or can I stop treatment when the bottle is empty?



What are the side effects?



Are there things I shouldn't eat, drink, or do (e.g. Driving, exposure to sunlight) when taking this medicine?



KEY TAKE AWAYS

Medication non-adherence costs \$290 billion dollars per year in the U.S. One way to improve outcomes and save costs is to strengthen your employee's medication adherence.



Employers can use claims data to identify the conditions and situations to target with medication adherence education and interventions.

Good medication adherence can deliver: ¹¹

- **Fewer sick days**
- **More productivity from employees with certain chronic conditions**
- **Reduced hospitalizations and emergency department visits**
- **Better employee health**

Employers, medical and pharmacy providers and payors need to create a balanced medication adherence approach. A combination of technology, education and reminder programs, with more targeted approaches for certain conditions and situations, can deliver better health outcomes and lower costs



The solution to medication non-adherence is not a one-size-fits all approach to say the least. With healthcare data and technology constantly evolving, the potential impact is enormous..

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Health Action Council is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) organization representing mid and large-size employers that works to improve human and economic health through thought leadership, innovative services, and collaboration. It provides value to its members by facilitating projects that improve the quality and moderate the cost of healthcare purchased by its members for their employees, dependents, and retirees.

Health Action Council also collaborates with key stakeholders health plans, physicians, hospitals and the pharmaceutical industry to improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare in the community.

LET'S KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

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