

Affordability and Medication Adherence

Medication adherence – often defined as taking 80% or more of prescribed doses – affects many patients, particularly those with financial barriers. Understanding how affordability affects patients differently and how to help them can improve overall health outcomes.



An estimated 20% to 30% of prescriptions are never filled.¹

Patients with chronic conditions are estimated to adhere to about 50% to 60% of prescribed medications.²

Supporting patients with affordability challenges

PATIENT CHALLENGE

OPTIONS

Medicare Part D



These patients struggle due to the complicated, four-phase structure of the program where the price can vary immensely. The deductible phase, initial coverage phase, coverage gap phase, and the catastrophic coverage phase all require different, sometimes hefty, payment amounts from the patient.

Have your patients use the Medicare Find a Plan site during open enrollment.

- Entering their ZIP code and medication regimen will generate a list of plans in the area along with estimated total cost, monthly expenses, and premiums
- The tool will estimate when the patient will enter and exit the donut hole phase and list out-of-pocket costs for that period
- Again, Medicare patients can check GoodRx to see if they can find a better price for their medication

Underinsured



Also known as “Medicaid Medically Needy,” these patients have significant health expenses but their income exceeds the eligibility requirements for assistance. For Medicaid to be activated under this program, the patient must spend down their income until it matches income requirements. Bills must be submitted monthly, and there is often a waiting period.

- Ensure that bills are faxed to the Medicaid office as soon as possible to shorten the time it takes to activate coverage
- Consider creating a process that automatically faxes bills from your office
- Suggest the patient check the GoodRx price for their medication to see if it is lower than the insurance price or what Medicaid offers

¹ Medication adherence: action steps for public health practitioners. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/files/Medication-Adherence-Action-Guide-for-PHPs.pdf>. Accessed August 12, 2022.

² Bosworth HB, Granger BB, Mendys P, et al. Medication adherence: a call for action. *Am Heart J.* 2011;162(3):412-424. doi:10.1016/j.ahj.2011.06.007.

Uninsured



According to the National Health Interview Survey, uninsured patients are the most likely to struggle with medication adherence, to ask their doctor for more affordable medications, and to buy medications from other countries.

Encourage help through programs like:

- The Department of Health and Human Services' no-cost or sliding scale aid programs
- Nonprofits like Dispensary of Hope
- Discount prescription medication programs (like GoodRx) can help patients save on medications

Key Takeaways

- An estimated 20% to 30% of prescriptions in the U.S. are never filled, and, in approximately half of all cases, patients do not take treatment as prescribed.
- Affordability is a major cause of medication nonadherence — particularly for the uninsured, the underinsured, and those with Medicare.
- Using assistance programs unique to each patient group can help mitigate affordability challenges.



Learn more about how GoodRx can help you help your patients.