



News Notes

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VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 4 | WINTER 2020 | RECENT EVENTS



INSIGHTS ON HOW TO MANAGE PHARMACY TREND (OCTOBER 20, 2020)

WellDyne, LVBCH's new pharmacy benefit manager (PBM), has managed to keep total drug spend increases over the past two years to 0.3% for all drugs, and an average of 5.6% for specialty drugs, said Nick Page, WellDyne's Chief Pharmacy Officer. During the October 20th LVBCH broker webinar, Insights on How to Manage Pharmacy Trend, Page and Patty Taddei-Allen, WellDyne's Senior Director of Clinical Analytics, discussed how providing better cost and engagement leads to better member care.

In September, LVBCH announced the selection of WellDyne and Express Scripts as its PBM Partners. Elaine Sneed, Regional Vice President of Sales, said WellDyne serves groups ranging from 200 to 200,000 lives, with an average size of 8,000 to 10,000.

Utilization, rather than price, has driven most of the increase in specialty drug costs. This growth results from an influx of new specialty drugs, as well as increased physician comfort in prescribing them. Medications that treat inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis, top the list of therapeutic categories driving increases with diabetes being the second highest driver. Drugs treating these diseases account for 32% of total specialty drug spend. Meanwhile, many other therapeutic categories are experiencing a negative specialty drug cost trend.

Regarding total drug spend, WellDyne has clinical focused formularies to create savings. It promotes the use of lower cost – versus higher cost generics and brand products – resulting in an 11% PMPM (per member per month) savings. It focuses on reducing the use of about 300 hyperinflationary drugs that can be up to 80% more expensive than effective alternatives. "At WellDyne our focus is to promote low net cost products," he said. "When hepatitis C was a big cost driver, we promoted the most cost effective medications in that therapeutic category, as we consistently do across the board. The end result is that clients who use our higher control formulary have a 6% lower PMPY (per member per year) than clients who use a more open, less controlled formulary."

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Meanwhile, WellDyne focuses on engaging members and has launched several high adoption tools, including the text-based WellConnect. “If you’re not sure whether people engage with text messages,” Page said, “then I encourage you to look at the unread messages on your phone. If you’re like most people, I’d guess that you probably have hundreds, if not thousands, of unread email messages. But it is rare for people to have unread text messages. In fact, most text messages are read within 10 minutes.”

WellDyne integrates the WellConnect Program with its analytics platform to create highly personalized messages about saving opportunities and its prior authorization program. The text app enables members to contact WellDyne representatives by phone or videoconference. WellDyne’s portal and app identify in-network pharmacies close to the member and then calculates comparative out-of-pocket costs.

“At WellDyne, we believe that educating and engaging members to more effectively participate in their care is foundational to improve their health and control health care costs,” she said. WellDyne uses various means to encourage medication adherence and participation in treatment protocols. Paraphrasing former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Coop, Taddei-Allen remarked that drugs don’t work for patients who don’t take them. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 100,000 people die each year because they fail to take their medications. Of these many seek care and never fill their prescriptions, while others lose interest after about six months.

When medication adherence increases, overall health care spend decreases. Patients who manage their diseases don’t need higher cost medications and are less likely to require emergency or inpatient care. Through its program in 2019, WellDyne achieved an overall medication adherence rate of 93.5%. Cost alone accounts for about 30% of non-adherence with health illiteracy being another major cause. The CDC estimates only 15% of Americans understand basic health care information enough to make decisions. Also, many patients don’t take medications because they don’t accept that they have a disease. WellDyne’s clinicians are trained to identify and address medication non-adherence.

In regard to future trends, Page said the use of digital therapeutics that track vital signs are increasing as is gene therapy to improve conditions or even cure patients. Soon, new biosimilars should start providing cost savings. For WellDyne’s full 2020 Trend Report, visit www.welldyne.com/our-drug-trend-report. For additional information, please contact: Elaine Sneed, WellDyne’s Regional Vice President of Sales, at (720) 849-1954 or esneed@welldyne.com.

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ABOUT WELLDYNE

For more than 25 years, WellDyne has leveraged deep clinical expertise to achieve better outcomes and reduce pharmacy trend for healthcare payers. Knowing that medications are among the safest, easiest and lowest cost treatments to help people live their best lives – WellDyne believes a smarter approach to the delivery of PBM services unleashes the full power of medications to reduce future healthcare costs. WellDyne services include wholly-owned specialty and mail order pharmacies, a retail pharmacy network and clinical programs targeted at the complex conditions driving pharmacy trend today. Visit www.WellDyne.com to learn more.

ABOUT NICK PAGE



Joining WellDyne as Vice President of Clinical Services in 2012, Nick Page was later promoted to Vice President, Specialty Pharmacy and now serves as the company's Chief Pharmacy Officer. With an extensive background in pharmacy operations and clinical pharmacy management, Nick has built a solid track record in strategic planning, business unit development, and innovative program and product development. In his current role he oversees all aspects of clinical strategy for the company, including product development, formulary management, trend analysis and clinical program execution. In previous roles, Nick held executive-level clinical leadership positions at MedImpact, PMSI (an Amerisource Bergen company), PBM Plus (an Omnicare company) and OhioHealth. He holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Pharmacy and earned his PharmD from The Ohio State University. Nick has also completed a post-doctoral ambulatory care residency at The Ohio State University.

ABOUT PATTY TADDEI-ALLEN



Patty Taddei-Allen is responsible for the WellDyne clinical value proposition and clinical programs for the company's PBM and specialty pharmacies. In 2013, Patty joined WellDyne as a Clinical Pharmacist. Progressing through management roles in clinical operations and outcomes research, she was named to her present position in 2019. Patty also lectures as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Florida-College of Pharmacy and is an Adjunct Faculty Instructor at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. Previously, she practiced community pharmacy at CVS Health. Patty serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the Journal of Managed Care and Specialty Pharmacy (JMCP) and is a peer-reviewer for JMCP. Patty received her bachelor's degree from the University of South Florida, and her doctor of pharmacy degree and MBA from the University of Florida. She is dual board-certified as an Ambulatory Care Pharmacist (BCACP) and Geriatric Pharmacist (BCGP).

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