

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy's *Concepts in Managed Care Pharmacy*

Disease State Management/Health Management

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) supports disease state management as a process by which health care systems identify, treat and/or prevent diseases within defined patient populations.

What is Disease State Management?

Disease State Management is a continuous, coordinated, evolutionary process that seeks to manage and improve the health status of a carefully defined patient population over the *entire* course of a disease. A successful disease state management program achieves this goal by identifying and delivering the most effective and efficient combination of available resources. This process encompasses the entire spectrum of health care; it includes disease *prevention* efforts as well as patient *management* after the disease has developed.

AMCP believes that the term "Health Management" more clearly describes the focus of this broader process. Health Management will be used throughout the rest of the *Concepts in Managed Care Pharmacy* section of the AMCP website.

Examples of Diseases Appropriate for Health Management Programs

Health care systems first determine criteria for selecting which disease states to aggressively manage. These criteria may include:

- Chronic diseases with the highest prevalence among a particular patient population,
- Diseases requiring high-dollar or multiple drug use,
- Diseases in which multiple treatment options are available,
- Evidence that a predictable care process could lead to marked improvements in the patient's health status,
- Diseases with a high risk for treatment failure

Examples of diseases that meet the above criteria include:

- Diabetes Mellitus
- Congestive Heart Failure
- Hypertension
- High Cholesterol
- Asthma
- Depression

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Health Management Programs

In traditional fee-for-service settings, health care professionals typically focus on specific, isolated medical events and the health care status of *individual* patients. For example, a physician who diagnoses and treats a patient with congestive heart failure may believe he or she has fulfilled their responsibility once the patient's symptoms are resolved.

By contrast, health management programs focus on multiple facets of patient care and maximize the health status of *defined patient populations*. Successful health management programs are developed and implemented in partnership with patients, physicians, pharmacists, other health care professionals, administrators, and payers because all of these individual stakeholders understand the value and relative contribution each brings to the program.

Under health management programs, a team of health care professionals first identifies patients within a specific population who are at risk of developing, or currently suffering from, a specific disease. Next, they develop and implement strategies for those patients and their health care team on specific ways to prevent, manage and treat the disease (e.g., enrolling patients in smoking cessation programs, administering appropriate drugs, reminding patients when it's time to get their physical checkups or prescription refills, or modifying dietary habits.)

Managed care organizations are well positioned to practice health management because they are dedicated to comprehensive, coordinated care. They focus on improving the health of entire patients populations, use available resources effectively, and are held accountable by patients, purchasers and regulators for the quality of their medical services. Managed care organizations integrate key health care services, including patient and health care professional education, as well as ambulatory care, acute care, home health care, and nursing home services. Such integration fosters greater continuity of patient care, leading to better health care outcomes.

Evaluation of Health Management Programs

Health management programs are objectively evaluated based on previously defined outcome points and the collection of baseline data on the natural course of the targeted disease. They are then considered from various perspectives:

- **Clinical Outcomes** - the result of medical care: What were the short-term and long-term goals of therapy and were they achieved? (A short-term goal may be increased asthma patient compliance with medication regimens, while a long-term goal may be reduced asthma-related hospital admissions).
- **Humanistic Outcomes** - measures the patient's own assessment of the impact of the program on his or her physical, social, and emotional well-being (e.g., does the patient experience less pain or return to more normal physical functioning and activities?).
- **Economic Outcomes** - answers the question, "Did our patients receive good value for what was spent on their care?" (e.g., did additional expenditures on pharmaceuticals lead to lower physician office visit rates and/or lower hospitalization rates or emergency room visits?).

Based on continuous, objective evaluation by health care professionals, the most effective programs are retained. Marginally effective or ineffective programs are either modified or abandoned.

The Role of the Pharmacist in Health Management Programs

Pharmacists are important contributors to the health management process. Pharmacists have the knowledge and skills to help achieve the goals of improving quality of care, producing desired patient outcomes, and reducing overall costs of care.

There are numerous ways for pharmacists to be involved in health management programs. Individual pharmacist involvement will vary according to each practice setting. Pharmacists who can access on-line, real-time patient information, such as diagnoses, coexisting medical conditions, laboratory test results, complete drug profiles, and the indications for which particular drugs are prescribed, have the most opportunity for continuous interaction with the health care management team. Pharmacists who see the patient at the time of prescription refills have repeated access to the patient and the likelihood of performing positive monitoring steps.

By working as a member of a health care team, the pharmacist can provide ongoing, comprehensive assessment of drug therapy and can share the results of that assessment with patients and other health care professionals.

Patient Interaction

The trained pharmacist can evaluate medication therapies, identify and manage drug-related problems for the patient, as well as provide advice on the disease and its management. Examples include:

- *Asthma Management*
 - Provide educational programs to patients about the disease,
 - Conduct periodic review of the patient's inhaler technique,
 - Perform ongoing monitoring of peak-flow function tests,
 - Manage chronic medication use, including compliance assistance.
- *Diabetes Management*
 - Provide educational programs to patients about the disease,
 - Regularly monitor both self-tested and laboratory tested blood glucose levels,
 - Educate patients on how to use home blood glucose monitoring equipment,
 - Monitor patient compliance with prescribed therapies, and in keeping scheduled clinic and laboratory appointments,
 - Screen for drug/drug, drug/food, drug/lab, and drug/disease interactions and adverse drug reactions,
 - Provide medication management and review.
- *Hypertension & Cholesterol Management*
 - Educate patients about these silent diseases,
 - Monitor compliance with medications, diet, and exercise regimens,
 - Screen for drug/drug, drug/food, drug/lab, and drug/disease interactions and adverse drug reactions,
 - Perform periodic blood pressure checks,
 - Perform periodic cholesterol level checks.

Health Care Professionals Interaction

Along with performing disease-specific clinical activities, pharmacists can also have a significant impact on the development, implementation, and improvement of health management programs. Examples include:

- Target high-risk and high-utilizing patients for education and/or intervention,
- Conduct outcomes research to form the basis for treatment guidelines,
- Ensure the ongoing involvement of the Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee in the health management process,
- Influence prescribing patterns,
- Educate other pharmacists and physicians about treatment guidelines,
- Provide expert information on medications and pharmacotherapy,
- Use health system databases to track drug expenditure patterns and health care professionals' adherence to health care management regimens.

Health Management Programs provide opportunities to improve patient outcomes. True health management can be achieved only with the complete commitment of the health care team. As the trained medication management specialist, the pharmacist has a leadership role to play in the collaborative development, implementation and improvement of health management programs.