



Managed Care Pharmacy Course Curriculum 2025



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Section 1. Introduction and Overview

Welcome to the 2025 Managed Care Curriculum!

This document provides guidance to instructors looking to teach, coordinate, and/or facilitate a managed care elective course. Much has changed since our most recent publication in 2017, so we're excited to share a refreshed approach to the Managed Care Curriculum.

The revised Managed Care Curriculum is based on the Fundamentals of Managed Care Pharmacy Program ("Fundamentals" for short). Students can enroll in this program at a lower cost than most textbooks and bulk discounts are available to schools and students. On top of that, students receive a certificate of completion and a digital badge at the end of the program, which they can include on their LinkedIn profiles and resumes/CVs. We recommend using the Fundamentals program as the backbone of the course and supplementing instruction with various activities and assessments, as described in more detail throughout this document. Click [HERE](#) for additional information on the Fundamentals program, or email amcplearn@amcp.org.

Rest assured, the Fundamentals program is just one of the options that course coordinators have when designing their managed care elective courses! The Managed Care Curriculum offers details on a suggested approach to teaching an elective course, including content, learning outcomes, and even a week-by-week schedule based on the Fundamentals program. However, coordinators may choose to deliver some or all of the material differently.

Each pharmacy program's needs and resources are different. For this reason, the guidance provided within this document is intended to be broad and meet the needs of everyone while also recognizing that each elective course will be unique. The guidance should not be considered prescriptive; instead, it should be used as a starting point that must be tailored to meet the needs of the individual programs, course coordinators, instructors, and students.

For example, the course design suggested within this guide is for a 3-credit, 14-week course. We recognize that some pharmacy curricula are designed to offer students 1- or 2-credit, 14-week electives; others may offer 3-credit, 7-week courses; and others may have different designs altogether. For this reason, instructors should customize the suggested content to meet their specific needs.

Also new to this version of the Managed Care Curriculum is what every pharmacy school should incorporate about managed care at a minimum. See [Section 6](#) for more details!

Acknowledgments

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Section 2. Things to Think About

Supplementary Activities and Assessments

Throughout the Detailed Course Schedule in [Section 3](#) below, you'll find suggested activities/assessments for each week to supplement a didactic or pre-recorded lecture. In addition to the proposed activities, consider this list of additional activities/assessments as needed.

- **Traditional Assessments (e.g., Quizzes/Exams)**
 - A good way to assess student learning of the Fundamentals modules is to incorporate a weekly quiz or quarterly exam. We encourage you to diversify grading away from quizzes/exams as the sole assessment method, as they encourage “cramming” and may not effectively prepare students for practice. Instead, consider using quizzes and exams to supplement learning by identifying core concepts that have not resonated with students. Think of these as “checkpoint” assessments before revisiting prior concepts.
- **Muddy/Most Interesting Points**
 - After each class, ask students to write down the one concept from class that is still confusing (“muddy”) to them or the point they found to be most interesting. This can help refine lectures/discussions for the future and allows you to revisit unclear topics in a timely manner before confusion compounds. Importantly, students should note whether the concepts they highlight are “muddy” or “interesting,” so time is not spent re-explaining points that students already understand.
- **Managed Care in the News**
 - This project asks students to identify, review, and present a current news article related to managed care. Students should summarize the article, provide background to catch the rest of the class up on the topic, and discuss the significance to the overall health care landscape.
- **AMCP Chapter Activities**
 - We encourage you to align activities with student AMCP student chapters when possible! For instance, if you are hosting a panel discussion within your elective course, consider opening the event to students in the local AMCP chapter who are not also in the elective! Also, consider offering extra credit to students who attend AMCP chapter events, if possible.
- **Real-World Examples**
 - Sharing real-world case anecdotes or even simulated practice scenarios will allow students to connect the dots between concepts more effectively. Connecting with practicing pharmacists can help with this! See Guest Speakers below.

Guest Speakers

Incorporating outside perspectives into managed care elective courses can be a valuable experience for students, faculty, and guest speakers alike. Current managed care electives approach this in various ways (Table 1). If the School/College of Pharmacy has an AMCP Student Chapter, AMCP suggests connecting with the [Chapter Diplomat](#). In addition, AMCP maintains a database of interested speakers. Email studentdevelopment@amcp.org if you are looking for a speaker.

Table 1.

Situation	Role of the Course Coordinator
An occasional individual guest speaker invited for a particular lecture	Course coordinator teaches most weeks but invites guest speakers for areas they are less comfortable with.
Individual guest lecturers invited to cover material most weeks or every week of the semester	Course coordinator organizes the schedule and speakers and facilitates assessments. Common for faculty members without a managed care background.
Adjunct faculty member coordinates elective, and guest speakers are co-workers/colleagues who split lectures	Course coordinator organizes the schedule and speakers and facilitates assessments. Course coordinator also covers material some weeks.
Collaborating with an individual external partner to split the course	Course coordinator teaches approximately half of the course, while a second faculty teaches the other half. Common for managed care/industry split courses.
Individual or panel of guest speakers supplement discussion	Course coordinator teaches the material and guest speakers share experiences and opinions.

Flipped-Classroom Model

We encourage all faculty to employ a flipped classroom model, if possible. This consists of having students watch pre-recorded lectures on their own time before class, followed by in-class activities that build upon the content from the recordings. We recognize and appreciate that some instructors prefer to use class time to lecture and assign out-of-class work. We still encourage the use of this Managed Care Curriculum as a guide, though more thoughtful revision may be required.

Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Technology has advanced quickly in recent years and continues to progress at a pace that makes it difficult to keep up. Specifically, artificial intelligence (AI) may enhance learning and reduce the burden of mundane tasks; however, it may also lead to academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or a host of other unwelcome uses. Specifying in which circumstances students are permitted to use AI may deter misuse, though in the absence of effective technology that can reliably detect content created or edited by AI, problems may still arise. Faculty must purposefully design activities such that the use of AI will, at most, marginally impact learning outcomes. Be sure to follow any existing school/program policies on AI. Some additional suggestions include:

- **Engage in on-the-spot discussions with students in the absence of smart devices to elicit honest reflection and opinions.** Help students dig deeper into responses by prompting further questions.
- **Limit written assignments. Assignments requiring students to write, reflect, summarize other documents, etc., may be done with AI in seconds.** Students may not learn from these exercises while instructors continue to spend significant time grading. Written assignments may be of more value if used as a starting point for discussion, so it is recommended to follow up with an in-class conversation about responses to a written assignment to clarify if any learning gaps persist.
- **Emphasize skills (not knowledge) when it comes to presentations. AI can easily enhance the quality of presentations, including the development of slides and accompanying speaker notes.** As always, faculty should assess the accuracy of the content, ensure all information is appropriately referenced, and determine the speaker's ability to answer follow-up questions. However, consider putting more weight on the presentation style, the presence of distractors, the speaker's ability to convey the information confidently, etc.

Residency and Fellowship Resources

An important component of teaching a managed care elective course involves providing students the resources they need to succeed following your course, including on advanced pharmacy practice experiences (APPEs), through residency and/or fellowship, and beyond. AMCP has a variety of resources to help, including:

- Resident and Fellow Resources ([LINK](#))
- Tips on Applying for a Residency or Fellowship ([LINK](#))
- Tips on Residencies and Fellowships from AMCP Members to Upcoming Graduates ([LINK](#))
- Your Roadmap to a Career in Managed Care Pharmacy ([LINK](#))
- Residency & Fellowship Directory ([LINK](#))

Focus of the Managed Care Curriculum

While the Managed Care Curriculum proposes a detailed course schedule for a managed care elective course, the focus is nearly entirely on managed care pharmacy practice. Given the overlap in concepts and the type of work done, some instructors may choose to build industry concepts into managed care elective courses. AMCP recognizes that the curriculum and elective offerings of each School/College of Pharmacy differ and encourages faculty to adapt their course to fit the needs of the program and their comfort and experience level. Topics that may be considered for pharmaceutical industry-based classes include, but are not limited to:

- Market Access
- Payer Account Management
- Medical Science Liaisons (MSLs) and Managed Markets MSLs
- Medical Information and Communications
- Drug Pricing and Distribution
- Marketing and Commercialization Strategy
- Value Marketing and Health Economics Outcomes Research
- Drug Discovery and Pharmaceutical Development
- Lifecycle Management
- Regulatory Considerations, Regulatory Chemistry, Manufacturing, and Controls (CMC)
- Target Product Profile and Labeling
- Biotech Valuation
- Drug Safety and Pharmacovigilance
- Patent Perspectives and Regulatory Exclusivity

Section 3. Sample Syllabus

Preamble

Below is a sample syllabus for a managed care elective course. Schools/Colleges of Pharmacy typically use a standardized syllabus template, in which case some portions of the below will need to be adapted to fit the program's requirements.

Sample Syllabus

[Course Number and Course Title]

[Semester and Year]

Course Coordinator and Faculty

<Personalize to your course by adding the name, contact information, preferred method of contact, and expected response time for the course coordinator and all faculty. Note that each school/college may have different minimum office hour requirements.>

Sample:

Name	Contact Information	Preferred Contact	Anticipated Response	Office Location and Office Hours
Course Coordinator				
Dr. Bob Smith, PharmD	bsmith@... (555) 555-...	Email or text	24 hours	Learning Center, Rm 4 Tues 3–6 pm
Course Instructors				
Dr. Jane Doe, PharmD, MBA	jdoe1@...	Email	48 hours	Virtual, by appointment
Dr. John Brown, BSPharm	jbrown@...	Email	48 hours	Virtual, by appointment

Course Time and Location

<Personalize to your course by inserting the day of the week, time, and location where your course will be meeting.>

Credit Hours

<Personalize to your course. The detailed course plan in [Section 4](#) is intended to be 3 credit hours.>

Prerequisites

<Personalize to your course. No prerequisites should be necessary for the detailed course plan in [Section 4](#). However, the detailed course plan is probably best suited for students in the second or third professional year of a four-year pharmacy program.>

Course Description

<Personalize to your course; however, the following sample is based on the detailed course plan below.>

Sample:

This managed care pharmacy elective course will provide an overview of managed care pharmacy and an understanding of how managed care pharmacy impacts the health care system.

The course will cover:

- Managed care pharmacy and the United States (U.S.) health care system
- Benefit design, formulary management, and utilization management
- Government programs (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid)
- Specialty medications
- Health economics outcomes research
- Roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for managed care pharmacists

The course will include guest speakers, small group activities, lectures, presentations, and group discussions. By course completion, the student will obtain knowledge of managed care pharmacy that can be valuable preparation for experiential education and career opportunities in various practice settings, including within a managed care organization, hospital administration, and community pharmacy management.

Course Objectives

<Personalize to your course; however, the following sample is based on the detailed course plan in [Section 4. Learning outcomes should map back to the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Curriculum Outcomes and Entrustable Professional Activities \(COEPA\) 2022. Additional mapping may be required to the ACPE Appendix 1 Standards. Updated ACPE Standards are expected in 2025, so these are not currently mapped in the sample below. Work with the school/college's Academic or Curriculum Affairs department \(or equivalent\) for additional guidance on mapping and school/college requirements.>](#)

Sample:

Course Learning Objectives	COEPA Mapping
1. Demonstrate the basic principles of managed care pharmacy	1.1 Seek, analyze, integrate, and apply foundational knowledge of medications and pharmacy practice.
2. Explain the U.S. drug distribution and reimbursement system and various managed care concepts (e.g., prior authorizations, Medicare Part D plans) to patients	2.2 Actively engage, listen, and communicate verbally, nonverbally, and in writing when interacting with or educating an individual, group, or organization.
	3.2 Exhibit attitudes and behaviors that embody a commitment to building and maintaining trust with patients, colleagues, other health care professionals, and society.
3. Describe the functions of a Pharmacy & Therapeutics (P&T) Committee and conduct formulary and prior authorization reviews	2.5.4 Ensure patients obtain care required in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.
	2.6 Optimize patient health care outcomes using available resources to improve medication-use systems.
4. Form opinions and debate perspectives on complex managed care concepts and hot topics	2.2 Actively engage, listen, and communicate verbally, nonverbally, and in writing when interacting with or educating an individual, group, or organization.
	3.2 Exhibit attitudes and behaviors that embody a commitment to building and maintaining trust with patients, colleagues, other health care professionals, and society.

Grading

<Personalize to your course; however, the following sample is based on the detailed course plan in [Section 4](#). Since the school/college may require assignments to be mapped back to the Course Objectives above, COEPA mapping is included in the sample below.>

Sample:

Assessment	Group or Individual Submission	% of the Final Grade	COEPA Mapping
Weekly Quiz on Fundamentals Pre-Class Webinar	Individual	26% (13 weeks @ 2% each)	1.1
P&T Formulary Drug Review	Group	15%	1.1, 2.2, 2.5.4, 2.6
Prior Authorization Reviews	Individual	10%	2.6
Patient Counseling Exercises	Individual	6% (3 @ 2% each)	1.1, 2.2, 3.2
Calculations	Individual	4% (2 @ 2% each)	1.1
Discussion Boards	Individual	4% (2 @ 2% each)	2.2, 3.2
Final Presentation	Group	25%	3.2
Participation	Individual	10%	3.2

Assignment Descriptions

<Personalize to your course. This may not be required by the school/college, but a sample of a single assignment description is included below for initial guidance. Assignments used in your course may vary significantly from those suggested in the detailed course curriculum; therefore, we also recommend personalizing the assignment descriptions.>

Sample:

P&T Formulary Drug Review: Assigned a new drug to the market, students will work in teams to review the medication in three parts. First, the group will review the efficacy and safety of the medication, including a comparison to other similar medications already on the market. Additionally, students will form their initial formulary and utilization management recommendations. In part 2, students will determine the cost-effectiveness of the medication compared with the alternatives and form their final coverage recommendations. Part three will include a presentation to the class on the medication in a simulated P&T meeting scenario.

Required & Recommended Texts and Other Resources

<Personalize to your course; however, the following is based on the detailed course plan in [Section 4](#).>

Sample:

Required Texts/Resources

- Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) Fundamentals of Managed Care Pharmacy ([LINK](#))

Recommended Texts/Resources

- AMCP Managed Care Glossary ([LINK](#))
- AMCP Access, Affordability, and Outcomes Report ([LINK](#))

- AMCP PowerPoint presentations ([LINK](#))
- Watkins J. Managed Care Pharmacy Practice: A Pharmacist's Perspective. Self-published, 2022.
- Navarro R. Managed Care Pharmacy Practice. 2nd ed. Gaithersburg, MD. Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2007.

Additional Resources

- AMCP Student Pharmacist Center ([LINK](#))
- Managed Care Journals
 - Journal of Managed Care & Specialty Pharmacy (JMCP) ([LINK](#))
 - The American Journal of Managed Care ([LINK](#))
- Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) ([LINK](#))
- Kaiser Family Foundation ([LINK](#))
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) ([LINK](#))
- International Society for Pharmacoeconomics and Outcomes Research ([LINK](#))

Hardware/Software and Other Supplies

- Internet access (high-speed) is recommended to access all required online materials.

Course Policies

<Personalize to your course. Course policies are typically school/college-specific, and samples are not included below. Section headers are included as a loose guide.>

- Attendance Policy
- Communication Policy
- Use of Technology/Mobile Devices in the Classroom
- Use of Artificial Intelligence
- Policies for Missed or Late Assessments/Activities
- Exam Procedures
- Course Grading Scale
- Progress and Academic Assistance
- Course Remediation Policy
- Mental Health Resources
- Student Accessibility Services
- Information Technology Resources
- Inclement Weather Policy
- Professionalism
- Academic Misconduct Policies, including Honor Code, Plagiarism
- Syllabus Changes

Course Schedule

<Personalize to your course; however, the following is based on the detailed course plan in [Section 4](#). The Managed Care Curriculum is based on a 14-week semester.>

Sample:

- Week 1 – Evolution and Principles of Managed Care
- Week 2 – Pharmacy Benefit Management Tools
- Week 3 – Behind the Scenes: Getting Medications to Patients through the Pharmacy Benefit
- Week 4 – Developing and Managing the Drug Formulary
- Week 5 – Trends and Utilization Management Deep Dive
- Week 6 – Trading Partners and Flow of Money in Managed Care Pharmacy
- Week 7 – Understanding Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Discounts and Rebates
- Week 8 – Managed Care Pharmacy Clinical and Educational Programs
- Week 9 – Medication Therapy Management
- Week 10 – Introduction to Specialty Pharmacy
- Week 11 – Medicare and Managed Care Pharmacy
- Week 12 – Medicaid and Managed Care Pharmacy
- Week 13 – The ABCs and Stars of Quality Measures
- Week 14 – Health Economics and Outcomes Research

Section 4. Detailed Course Plan

Week 1 – Evolution and Principles of Managed Care

Learning objectives

- Describe the history of health insurance in the U.S.
- Identify the goals of managed care in terms of patient care, outcomes, and costs.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 1)

- The history of health insurance
- What is managed care?
- Managed care insurance concepts (e.g., lines of business, pharmacy vs. medical benefits)
- Managed care models (e.g., HMOs, PPOs)
- Other introductory considerations (e.g., HDHPs, ACOs, PBMs)

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Course expectations and projects
- Career opportunities in managed care
- The purpose of insurance (e.g., protect individuals from unexpected, catastrophic costs)
- The Oregon Health Insurance study ([LINK](#))
- The relationship between high health care costs, demand for insurance, and use of health care services

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Discussion Board:** Each student can be asked to identify a unique type of insurance offered in the marketplace and determine, given the purpose of insurance, if consumers should consider purchasing that type of insurance.

Additional resources

- Happe LE, Edgar BS. A primer on managed care pharmacy. *J Manag Care Spec Pharm.* 2023;29(12):1371-1376. ([LINK](#))
- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - What is Managed Care Pharmacy?
 - History of Managed Care Organizations
 - Managed Care Models
 - Managed Care Career Paths
 - Post-Graduate Training Opportunities in Managed Care
 - Pharmacist Opportunities Within a PBM
- AMCP Roadmap to a Career in Managed Care Pharmacy ([LINK](#))
- AMCP Resident and Fellow Resources ([LINK](#))

Week 2 – Pharmacy Benefit Management Tools

Learning objectives

- Discuss common strategies used to manage the cost of medications and access to medications in a pharmacy benefit.
- Recognize how drug cost and utilization management strategies can be combined to design a customized pharmacy benefit.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 2)

- Patient cost-sharing
- Formulary
- Generic substitution and therapeutic interchange
- Distribution channels
- DUR
- UM strategies (e.g., QL, PA, ST)
- Manufacturer and pharmacy contracting
- Clinical/educational programs

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Gaps in DUR (e.g., patients filling prescriptions without insurance at multiple pharmacies)

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group Discussion:** What is the role of PBMs in managed care?

Additional resources

- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Pharmacy Practice in Managed Care
 - Pharmacy Benefit Design

Week 3 – Behind the Scenes: Getting Medications to Patients through the Pharmacy Benefit

Learning objectives

- Describe the insurance coverage and benefits and its various components and participants.
- Summarize the difference between traditional paper prescribing and electronic prescribing.
- List the steps involved in adjudicating a prescription drug claim.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 3)

- Plan sponsors (e.g., employers, Medicare, Medicaid, Exchange)
- e-Prescribing
- Data exchange and standardization (e.g., claims adjudication, NCPDP SCRIPT and SIG standards)
- Claims processing (e.g., NDCs, administrative, financial, and clinical edits)

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- How pharmacy benefit reimbursement differs from the medical benefit
- Other common types of codes in health care (e.g., J-codes, HCPCS codes, ICD-10 codes)
- Drug development process, patents, and exclusivity

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Given a simulated claims report, mine the data using Excel (e.g., filtering, PivotTables) to identify trends.

Additional resources

- Hernandez I, Hung A. A primer on brand-name prescription drug reimbursement in the United States. *J Manag Care Spec Pharm.* 2024;30(1):99-106. ([LINK](#))

Week 4 – Developing and Managing the Drug Formulary

Learning objectives

- Explain what a drug formulary is and how it is developed and maintained.
- State the composition, role, and responsibilities of a P&T Committee.
- Summarize the process that begins with the identification of a likely new drug approval and culminates in a formulary decision about the drug.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 4)

- Formularies and formulary management
- P&T Committees, drug monographs, and review timelines, including PIE
- AMCP Format for Formulary Submissions and dossiers
- Comparative effectiveness research and cost-effectiveness
- Additional formulary considerations (e.g., benefit, tiers, UM strategies)

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Formularies versus preferred drug lists
- Client-specific formularies
- Trends in drug exclusions and impact on payers and patients

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Review existing plan formularies.
- **Group project:** Formulary review on a new drug to the market. Students should assess the medication's efficacy, safety, and cost-effectiveness compared with alternatives. Students should develop formulary and utilization management recommendations and present them to the class as part of a simulated P&T meeting. Alternatively, students may participate in the AMCP Foundation P&T Competition.

Additional resources

- Hyder T, Reddy V. A primer on formulary structures and strategies. *J Manag Care Spec Pharm.* 2024;30(2):206-210. ([LINK](#))
- AMCP Format for Formulary Submissions Version 5.0 ([LINK](#))
- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - AMCP Format for Formulary Submissions
 - Drug Formulary Development & Management
 - Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee

Week 5 – Trends and Utilization Management Deep Dive

Learning objectives

- Identify the various stakeholders involved with the prescription drug benefit.
- Explain how managed care organizations determine pharmacy reimbursement for drug products and associated dispensing fees.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program

- UM was covered briefly in Module 4.

Concepts that may be discussed

- Trends
 - What are trends, and why do they matter?
 - Normalizing variables to more safely interpret trend (e.g., identifying reasonable time comparisons, considering seasonality, claim adjustments, changes in membership)
 - Typical considerations in trend (i.e., changes in overall trend, utilization, and unit cost)
 - Additional concepts (e.g., PMPM, PMPY, generic dispensing rates)
 - How to calculate trend and PMPM spending
- UM
 - How health plans/PBMs determine which medications require PA and how they develop PA criteria
 - Primary types of PA criteria (i.e., ST, appropriate use, safety, prescriber qualifications, reauthorization)
 - PA market-level analyses
 - Detail on the process of PAs (e.g., the role of each entity within the process, including the pharmacy, prescriber, health plan/PBM). Review timelines, gaps in the process, and possible improvements that could be made.
 - **Relate it back:** How UM and DUR are related

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Simulated exercise:** Students can review simulated PA cases independently, followed by a group discussion on the decisions made.
- **Simulated patient counseling:** Conduct counseling for simulated patients presenting to a community pharmacy whose prescriptions require PA.
- **Group Discussion:** Each student can be asked about their thoughts on the complexity of the PA process.
- **Group Project:** Interpreting PA criteria. Students are asked to identify at least 5 PA policies online for an assigned medication. After locating the policies, students research where each criterion within these policies may have come from, justify the appropriateness, and offer suggestions for updates to each policy, if necessary.

Week 6 – Trading Partners and Flow of Money in Managed Care Pharmacy

Learning objectives

- Identify the various stakeholders involved with the prescription drug benefit.
- Explain how managed care organizations determine pharmacy reimbursement for drug products and associated dispensing fees.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 5)

- U.S. health care system overview
- Drug distribution and payment system
- Drug pricing benchmarks (e.g., WAC, AWP, MAC, NADAC, AAC)
- Pharmacy reimbursement, drug cost calculations, and dispensing fees

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Pharmacy networks
- Additional price benchmarks (e.g., FUL, AMP, ASP, Best Price)

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Discussion Board:** Each student can be asked about their thoughts on the complexity of the U.S. drug reimbursement system.
- **Calculations:** Pharmacy reimbursement calculations
- **Calculations:** Patient cost-sharing calculations

Additional resources

- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Drug Payment Methodologies

Week 7 – Understanding Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Discounts and Rebates

Learning objectives

- Discuss the structure and impact of rebate contracts offered by pharmaceutical manufacturers.
- Explain how rebates and formulary decision-making can be related.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 6)

- Discounts versus rebates
- Rebate revenue sharing
- Types of rebates (e.g., access, performance-based, OBC)
- Factors that impact rebate negotiations (e.g., drug uniqueness, organization size, shifts in clinical picture)
- Copay assistance, copay maximizer programs, copay accumulator programs, alternative funding models

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- **Relate it back:** Which aspects of benefit design/utilization management manufacturer contracts may impact (e.g., alternatives included on the formulary, language in prior authorization criteria, other restrictions)
- Side-by-side comparison of patient, payer, and manufacturer responsibilities in the presence of copay assistance, a copay maximizer program, a copay accumulator program, and an alternative funding program

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group discussion:** What is the difference between a discount and a rebate? How do pharmacy discounts differ from manufacturer rebates?
- **Simulated exercise:** Students will negotiate to obtain rebates from a simulated manufacturer (instructor) in exchange for updates to formulary/UM requirements.

Additional resources

- Kenney JT, et al. A primer on brand-name prescription drug contracting. *J Manag Care Spec Pharm.* 2024;30(5):507-513. ([LINK](#))
- Choi D, et al. A primer on copay accumulators, copay maximizers, and alternative funding programs. *J Manag Care Spec Pharm.* 2024;30(8):883-896. ([LINK](#))
- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Formulary Manufacturer Contracting

Week 8 – Managed Care Pharmacy Clinical and Educational Programs

Learning objectives

- Name types of pharmacy clinical and educational programs that may contribute to ensuring optimal medication use by managed care plan members.
- Describe factors contributing to medication adherence challenges.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 7)

- Goals and types of clinical education programs for providers and members
- Disease and care management programs
- Adherence, measures of adherence (i.e., MPR, PDC), and adherence improvement programs

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Impact of cost-sharing on adherence
- Adherence differences between mail-order and community pharmacy

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Debate:** Should all medications be free? Are medications too expensive?
- **Calculations:** Adherence calculations

Week 9 – Medication Therapy Management

Learning objectives

- Define MTM and its key components.
- Discuss the benefits of MTM for patients, health systems, and payers.
- Summarize the impact of government and health care quality improvement mandates on the demand for pharmacist-conducted MTM.
- Describe patient eligibility for MTM services under Medicare Part D and the types of patients most likely to benefit from non-Medicare MTM services.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 8)

- History of MTM
- Core elements of MTM (e.g., CMR, TMR, PMR, MAP)
- Patient eligibility for Medicare Part D MTM program (e.g., chronic conditions, multiple chronic medications, annual medication costs that are likely to exceed a certain threshold)

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Specific annual CMS requirements

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Determine the appropriateness of sample MTM program eligibility requirements.
- **Simulated patient counseling:** Conduct MTM counseling and documentation for simulated patients who have met eligibility requirements.

Additional resources

- Annual CMS MTM Requirements ([LINK for 2025](#))
- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Medicare Part D: Medication Therapy Management

Week 10 – Introduction to Specialty Pharmacy

Learning objectives

- Describe how specialty pharmacies differ from traditional retail pharmacies.
- Discuss approaches health plans and pharmacy benefit management companies take to manage specialty drugs.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 9)

- Definition of specialty drugs
- Specialty drug trend management tools and challenges
- How specialty pharmacies differ from traditional pharmacies
- Specialty drug distribution (e.g., specialty pharmacy, buy-and-bill, exclusive distribution vs. limited distribution vs. open access)

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- **Relate it back:** How specialty pharmacy networks differ from traditional pharmacy networks
- Examples of medications that may be considered specialty based on various characteristics
- Gold/clear bagging, including how it differs from white and brown bagging
- Biosimilars (e.g., interchangeability, naming conventions, potential/realized cost-savings, pharmacy vs. medical benefit biosimilars)
- Gene therapies, including management strategies and alternative payment models (e.g., subscription payments, drug mortgaging)
- Precision medicine, personalized medicine, and pharmacogenomics
- Digital therapeutics

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Work through a series of questions on biosimilars-related topics (e.g., the importance of interchangeability, how to improve provider uptake, available data on switching).

Additional resources

- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Personalized Medicine & Pharmacogenomics
 - Specialty Pharmacy & Biosimilars

Week 11 – Medicare and Managed Care Pharmacy

Learning objectives

- Explain what is covered by each of the four major components of Medicare (Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D).
- Discuss the requirements and structure of the standard Medicare Part D drug benefit.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 10)

- What is covered under each component of Medicare
- Medications covered under each component of Medicare
- Part D exclusions and B versus D coverage
- Enrollment considerations for Part D (e.g., dual beneficiaries)
- Inflation Reduction Act impact on Medicare
- Unique aspects of Part D formulary design

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- Medicare.gov Plan Finder
- Medicare Prescription Payment Plan
- **Relate it back:** Narrow Part D pharmacy networks
- What counts (and does not count) toward TrOOP, and how this impacts out-of-pocket spending
- The Affordable Care Act and Inflation Reduction Act

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Get comfortable with the medicare.gov website, including where to find specific information on patient costs in different phases of coverage.
- **Simulated patient counseling:** Help simulated patients find Medicare plans using the medicare.gov website and help them understand their anticipated costs with a given plan.

Additional resources

- CMS.gov ([LINK](#))
- Medicare.gov ([LINK](#))
- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Medicare Part D

Week 12 – Medicaid and Managed Care Pharmacy

Learning objectives

- Explain how Medicaid is administered and funded.
- Summarize approaches used to manage the Medicaid pharmacy benefit.
- Describe how Medicaid differs from other lines of business.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 11)

- Background and eligibility
- Medicaid payment models
- Medicaid-specific considerations on previously covered topics (e.g., PDLs, rebates, UM, distribution)
- Emerging trends in Medicaid

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- State-specific Medicaid considerations
- Medicaid block grants

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Debate:** Should states institute Medicaid work requirements?
- **Presentation:** Each group presents on different state approaches to Medicaid.

Additional resources

- Medicaid.gov ([LINK](#))

Week 13 – The ABCs and Stars of Quality Measures

Learning objectives

- Review how a health plan can become accredited by national accreditation organizations.
- Explain the role of quality care measures in managed care pharmacy.
- Describe the Medicare Star Ratings program and measures that impact managed care pharmacy.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 12)

- Health plan accreditation and NCQA
- HEDIS, CAHPS, and URAC
- Purpose and development process of quality measures
- CMS Star Ratings

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- **Relate it back:** Where to find detail on CMS Star Ratings on the Medicare.gov website
- Why are Star Ratings and quality metrics important to managed care organizations?

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Identify different pharmacy-related HEDIS/Star measures and discuss how pharmacists can improve these measures.
- **Simulated patient counseling:** Explain HEDIS measures/Star Ratings to a simulated patient.

Additional resources

- Annual Star Rating Technical Notes ([LINK for 2025](#))
- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - HEDIS & HEDIS Measures
 - Pharmacy Quality Measures

Week 14 – Health Economics and Outcomes Research

Learning objectives

- Define HEOR and its importance in health care decision-making.
- Explain common study designs leveraged to generate HEOR evidence.

Topic areas covered within the Fundamentals program (Module 13)

- How HEOR relates to value in health care
- How evidence and HEOR contribute to value assessment
- Defining value for each stakeholder
- Different types of evidence (e.g., clinical evidence, cost-effectiveness or cost-utility analysis, budget impact analysis, RWE)
- Types of HEOR studies (e.g., retrospective database analysis, economic modeling, PROs, systematic review & meta-analyses, other observational studies)
- Types of economic evaluations (e.g., cost-minimization, cost-effectiveness, cost-utility, cost-benefit)

Additional concepts that may be discussed

- How drug-specific factors (e.g., the type and severity of adverse events) can impact the value of medications

Ideas for supplementary activities and assessments

- **Group work:** Provided a series of real-world evidence and clinical studies, students will determine whether health plans should consider covering that medication based on the potential value it brings to the market.
- **Final Presentation:** Provided a managed care hot topic earlier in the semester, students will present a 15-minute presentation to their peers. Students should take a stance on the topic and justify their position.

Additional resources

- **AMCP PowerPoint Presentations** ([LINK](#))
 - Value of Pharmaceuticals in Managed Care Pharmacy
 - Outcomes Research
 - Budget Impact Analysis
 - Pharmacoeconomics

Section 5. Acronyms

Acronyms Used Throughout the Managed Care Curriculum Document

Note that this list does not cover all acronyms used in the Fundamentals program.

- AAC - Actual acquisition cost
- ACO - Accountable Care Organization
- AMP - Average manufacturer price
- ASP - Average sales price
- AWP - Average wholesale price
- CAHPS - Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems
- CMR - Comprehensive medication review
- CMS - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- DUR - Drug utilization review
- FUL - Federal Upper Limit
- HDHP - High-deductible health plan
- HEDIS - Health Care Effectiveness Data and Information Set
- HEOR - Health economics and outcomes research
- HMO - Health maintenance organization
- MAC - Maximum allowable cost
- MAP - Medication-related action plan
- MPR - Medication possession ratio
- MTM - Medication therapy management
- NADAC - National average drug acquisition cost
- NCPDP - National Council on Prescription Drug Programs
- NCQA - National Committee for Quality Assurance
- NDC - National drug code
- OBC - Outcomes-based contracting
- PA - Prior authorization
- PBM - Pharmacy benefit manager
- PDC - Proportion of days covered
- PDL - Prescription drug list
- PIE - Pre-approval information exchange
- PMPM - Per member per month
- PMPY - Per member per year
- PMR - Personalized medication record
- PPO - Preferred provider organization
- PRO - Patient-reported outcomes
- P&T Committee - Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee
- QL - Quantity limit
- RWE - Real-world evidence
- ST - Step therapy
- TMR - Targeted medication review
- TrOOP - True out-of-pocket costs
- UM - Utilization management
- WAC - Wholesale acquisition cost

Section 6. Proposed Minimum Requirements for Pharmacy Curricula

Preamble

Below, you'll find a summary of topics and related concepts that represent the minimum standard that should be incorporated in all pharmacy school curricula.

By signing up for a managed care elective course, students are expressing an interest in potentially pursuing a career in managed care pharmacy. Therefore, elective courses should be designed with the mindset of, **"What do 100% of managed care pharmacists need to know?"**

Conversely, students learning managed care concepts as part of required courses may pursue any field of pharmacy practice upon graduation and may not have an interest specifically in managed care. Therefore, this section represents the answer to the question, **"What do 100% of pharmacists need to know about managed care?"**

At a minimum, all graduating pharmacy students should be able to:

- Explain, in an unbiased manner, formularies and various types of utilization management, including prior authorization (PA), quantity limits, and step therapy.
 - Regarding PA, all graduating pharmacists must be able to discuss the purpose of a PA, the PA process, the patient's options when faced with a PA, anticipated timelines to resolving a PA, and how PA criteria are developed and implemented.
- Describe, in an unbiased manner, what a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) is, the roles of PBMs, how the functions of PBMs relate to health plans, and the importance of PBMs in our current drug distribution and reimbursement system.
- Explain the differences between different government lines of business, including Medicare and Medicaid.
- Recognize the open enrollment period for Affordable Care Act plans (also known as exchange, marketplace, or health care reform plans) and Medicare plans and help individuals find plans using the Medicare.gov website.
- Define various terms related to patient cost-sharing responsibilities (e.g., premiums, deductibles, copayments, coinsurances, out-of-pocket maximums).
- Identify career opportunities for pharmacists within the field of managed care.

AMCP's mission is to improve patient health by ensuring access to high-quality, cost-effective medications and other therapies.

Its diverse membership includes pharmacists, students, physicians, nurses, and industry experts charting the future of managed care.

“If you are pursuing a nontraditional career, everyone in the AMCP community is very devoted and fully receptive to students reaching out to develop connections and learn more about managed care and nontraditional roles..”

Macy Meng

Student

AMCP Student Pharmacist Committee Chair (2024-2025)

AMCP Member since 2023





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