

TO IMPROVE ADHERENCE, START WITH LISTENING

A PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO MEDICATION ADHERENCE

Medication non-adherence, or the failure of patients to take their medications as prescribed, accounts for 125,000 deaths, 10 percent of hospitalizations and costs up to \$289 billion per year according to research in the Annals of Internal Medicine. There are many reasons patients do not take their medications: cost is certainly a factor, but also things like lack of adequate transportation, forgetfulness or even fear and embarrassment can all lead to non-adherence.

Regardless of the reason, most patients are not purposely trying to disregard your recommendations and may not recognize the severity of their actions. Understanding what drives medication non-adherence and then developing a strategy to identify and remedy the situation can help improve patient outcomes and compliance.

1 IN 4 new prescriptions are never picked up at the pharmacy

up to **80%** of patients drop out of chronic care management plans, including medication regimens

14% of people can't fill prescriptions due to **high costs**

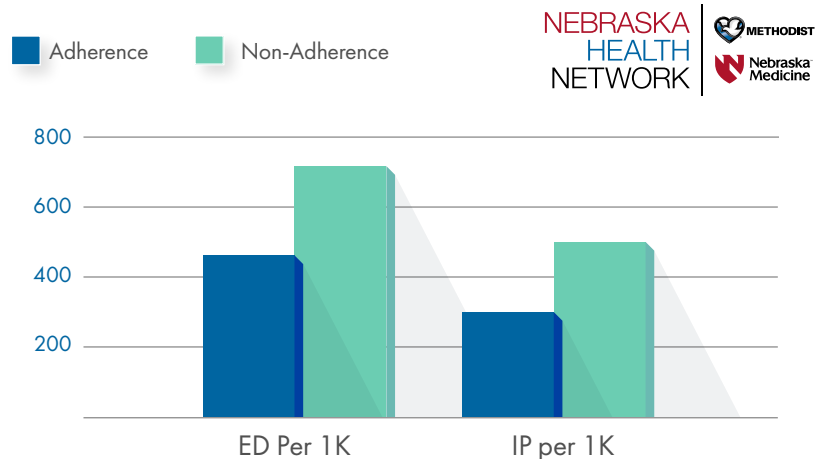
50% of medication is not taken as **prescribed**

3 MILLION patients face **transportation barriers** related to health care

LOCAL IMPACT

The negative impact of medication non-adherence often results in higher emergency department and inpatient hospital utilization rates. In a review of Medicare beneficiaries, ED utilization was 45% higher for individuals who were not compliant. Similarly, inpatient admissions were 53% higher as well.

Comparison based on NHN Medicare beneficiaries with similar risk stratification June 2019 through May 2020.



Rates of Emergency Department and Inpatient Hospital Utilization per 1,000 patients

WARNING SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

Several factors can influence a patient’s willingness or ability to take his or her medication. Look for these early predictors to identify patients who may be non-adherent:

- Treatment plan isn’t working or you see limited clinical improvement
- Language or health literacy barriers
- History of mental health issues like anxiety, depression or addiction
- Expressions of concern over medication cost or overall finances
- Emotional responses such as fear of side effects, not believing the medication will make a difference, feelings of frustration or stating they are tired of taking medications
- Limited mobility or transportation issues
- Forgetfulness, complexity of drug regimen



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- 1 Openly discuss your patient’s concerns around cost, transportation and directions.
- 2 Directly ask patients about their ability to get and take medications.
- 3 Simplify the instructions and ensure patients understand the medication regimen.
- 4 Ask patients about where they get their medications filled and the cost. If a patient is unfamiliar with the cost, it may be a sign that they are not actively refilling the prescription.
- 5 Connect patients with a health coach or pharmacist who can help further uncover and address adherence barriers.
- 6 Request use of a pill box or blister-card packaging from dispensing pharmacy. Pill boxes are a low-cost, visual reminder. More tech-savvy patients may benefit from an app or digital pill box with built-in notifications or dispensing.

PRESCRIBING HABITS THAT IMPROVE ADHERENCE



When appropriate, consider 90-day versus 30-day prescriptions supplies, which can improve the likelihood that a patient will refill their prescription.



Request medication sync from dispensing pharmacy to align refill dates across multiple prescriptions to help patients stay organized.



Rely on technologies within electronic prescribing platform like cost comparison tools or real-time benefit check to assess cost and formulary status of prescribed medication. Bring patient into decision making process prior to sending prescription to pharmacy.

Sources: American Hospital Association, American Journal of Managed Care, Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs, Health Affairs, HFMA and Journal of Medical Internet Research.