

A PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO MEDICATION ADHERENCE

To Improve Compliance, Start with Listening

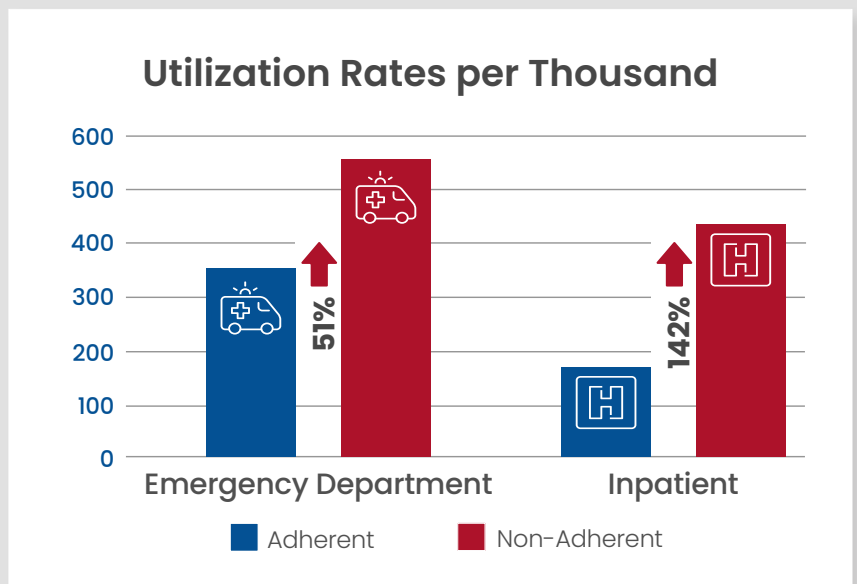
Medication non-adherence, or the failure of patients to take their medications as prescribed, accounts for 125,000 deaths, 25% of hospitalizations and costs up to \$289 billion per year according to US Pharmacist. There are many reasons patients do not take their medications: cost is certainly a factor, but things like lack of adequate transportation, forgetfulness or even fear and embarrassment can 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 developing a strategy to identify and remedy the situation can help improve patient outcomes and compliance.



HOW MEDICATION NON-ADHERENCE IMPACTS NHN PATIENTS

Medication non-adherence often results in higher utilization rates and poorer outcomes. Within the NHN, Medicare beneficiaries who are adherent to medications that help treat diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and hyperlipidemia, use emergency and inpatient services at a lower rate than beneficiaries that were non-adherent to prescription medications.



This comparison is based on an analysis of MSSP beneficiaries who are either adherent or non-adherent to medications that help treat diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and hyperlipidemia from May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024.

1 in 5
new prescriptions are never filled¹

55% OF PATIENTS WHO FAILED TO FILL A PRESCRIPTION CITED COST AS THE REASON²



50% of medication is not taken as prescribed¹

Non-adherence accounts for:

- Up to 50% of treatment failures
- 125,000 deaths
- Up to 25% of hospitalizations³

14.5 million adults lack reliable transportation for daily living including driving to health-care appointments or picking up prescriptions⁴



1, CDC; 2, Journal of Managed Care Specialty Pharmacy; 3, US Pharmacist; 4, HFMA

WARNING SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

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

- The 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 or complexity of the 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 a pill box or blister-card packaging from the 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 prescription supplies, which can improve the likelihood that a patient will refill their prescription.



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



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