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# Pharmacy Benefit News

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## Commentary: Diagnostic Errors in Primary Care -- An Underappreciated Problem

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently prioritized patient safety areas in primary care, and included diagnostic errors as a high-priority problem. In addition, a recent report from the Institute of Medicine in the USA, entitled 'Improving Diagnosis in Health Care', concluded that most people will likely experience a diagnostic error at some point in their lifetime." Why isn't this problem commonly discussed in the media and professional literature? Clearly, people need to respect their physicians and the diagnoses that they are given during their health care evaluations. It would also be more useful if there were specific parameters that both professionals and the lay public could focus on to question potential problems.

Unfortunately, research has not identified a "magic bullet" to solve this problem, but it has identified that this is a multifaceted problem that requires many specialties to coordinate action plans. The British Medical Journal has published an article that states..."we recommend that the WHO consider bringing together primary care leaders, practicing frontline clinicians, safety experts, policymakers, the health IT community, medical education and accreditation organizations, researchers from multiple disciplines, patient advocates, and funding bodies among others, to address the many common challenges and opportunities to reduce diagnostic error." The commonality of certain medical diagnoses makes this an international problem that needs to be addressed.

Source: Singh, H. (16, August 16). The Global Burden of Diagnostic Errors in Primary Care. BMJ Quality and Safety. Retrieved November 01, 16, from <http://quality.safety.bmj.com/content/early/2016/08/16/bmjqs-2016-005401.full>

**Analytics at Work: A Real World Example**

## Approved? Denied?

The Medical Directors of one of our national clients asked for our help with pre-certifications on Specialty Medical Claims. We addressed their concerns by assuring them that Pro Pharma has the knowledge base and the resources to evaluate Specialty Medications relating to –

- FDA approval for the submitted diagnosis(s)
- Approval status for miscellaneous codes
- Identification of termed codes and NDCs for denials
- Dose for the indicated condition
- Quantity to approve

Pro Pharma analyzes their Specialty Claims and sends back the results daily. Pro Pharma is also screening for required genomic testing and rebate options.

**Outcome:** Approximately 50% of claims are denied for benefit non-compliance. Over 70% of claims are denied for dosage and/or quantity. The remaining claims are approved for clinically valid and benefit compliant reasons.

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### Commentary: Medi-Cal and Medicaid - A Shared Accountability Program

The California Health Care Foundation (CHCF) convened a group of panelists to discuss the future of Medi-Cal. The findings were general enough that they would apply to most, if not all, State Medicaid programs.

The primary finding was that Medi-Cal was “a program with shared accountability among providers to achieve high-value, high-quality, and whole-person care.” The difficulty is that there is a wide disparity of opinions about how to move forward and the necessary pace of change. The panelists did prioritize their recommendations. The top recommendations were:

1. Intensify efforts to coordinate care for patients with serious medical illness
2. Invest in initiatives that address the health-related needs of patients with complex medical conditions
3. Data improvement
4. Strengthen accountability by revising rate setting methodologies
5. Address workforce shortages
6. The other recommendations focused on Medi-Cal financing, rethink the core structure of Medi-Cal managed care, invest in health information technology (HIT), and re-examine Medi-Cal financing. Of particular import was the recommendation to align incentives of Medi-Cal with the health care marketplace.

All of the above recommendations are applicable across State

### Commentary: Drug Pricing Analyses Add to the Growing Controversy

The Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER), a non-profit organization, released a study in the third quarter of 2015 that identified evolocumab (Repatha—Amgen) and alirocumab (Praluent—Regeneron Pharmaceuticals) as “vastly overpriced” to treat cholesterol.

Their analysis indicated the price-to-value should lead to a price of about 15% of their list prices for medications that reportedly lower LDL cholesterol 40% or more when patients were already taking statins. Express Scripts, a Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM), reportedly will use the ICER findings in its negotiations with manufacturers.

Drug value-to-price analyses are common in Europe, Australia and Great Britain. The result will certainly be different dependent on the methodology of the analyses. As in all analyses, the assumptions are crucial. As an analyst, we always question assumptions before citing results. Remember that publication of results does not validate findings.

Source: Pollack, A. (16, September 8). New Cholesterol Drugs Are Vastly Overpriced, Analysis Says. Retrieved November 01, 16, from [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/09/business/new-cholesterol-drugs-are-vastly-overpriced-analysis-says.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/09/business/new-cholesterol-drugs-are-vastly-overpriced-analysis-says.html?_r=0)

Medicaid programs and impact the interaction between the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Exchanges and State Medicaid programs. Coordination of care, data analytics, revised rates, and aligning incentives should be a target for all State programs as they work to improve the ACA Exchanges and/or coordinate all health care programs.

**Source:** Hernandez, S. R. (16, August 16). Moving Medi-Cal Forward — Together. Retrieved November 1, 16, from <http://www.chcf.org/articles/2016/08/moving-medical-forward-together>



## Pro Pharma's JCode Calculator™

### **JCode Calculator™**

**PRO PHARMA's JCode Calculator™** is a Specialty Injectables Pricing Web-based application designed exclusively for our clients to save time and money by:

- ***Standardizing Reimbursement Procedures***
- ***Eliminating Overpayments***

• ***Cutting Labor Costs***

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Pro Pharma Pharmaceutical Consultants, Inc. has assisted payer and providers for over 29 years to maintain quality while controlling costs.

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