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## Pharmacy Benefit News

From Pro Pharma

Email  
[Dr. Stern](mailto:Dr.Stern)



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### Medco Enters the UK

Medco Health Solutions entered into a joint venture with Dublin, Ireland-based United Drug plc, an international provider of outsourced services to the healthcare industry. The joint venture targets home care products that are largely offered by pharmaceutical companies to the National Health Service free of charge as value-added packages. The majority of pharmacy homecare services are provided to patients with long-term or complex conditions, such as cancer and HIV, removing the need for a healthcare professional to administer treatment.

The UK market, which is currently ruled by Healthcare at Home, is thought to encapsulate more than 100,000 patients with an estimated drug spend of £1 billion, a figure which is currently rising at 15% per annum.

The joint venture key points:

- Already over 30% of the pharmacy budget in hospitals is accounted for by medicines supported by homecare services, but as the market expands it will become increasingly important for providers to go beyond 'merely' delivering an efficient service.
- Provides highly skilled professional teams, working to tight protocols developed with the clinical team in the Trust, to support patients with individual tailored counseling and better levels of adherence.
- Provides more sophisticated data collection and reporting supported by seamless information systems

**Comment:** The PBM market was saturated in the US before the new health care bill. However, the rest of the world provides new markets as their Healthcare IT infrastructures improve. This spreads the business risk for PBMs and the Medco joint venture is illustrative of such efforts.

### More than Half of Diabetics Skip Insulin Injections

More than half of people with diabetes using insulin injections to control their diabetes say they have intentionally skipped an injection. One-fifth of them report that they do so "sometimes" or "often," according to a study in *Diabetes Care*, which looked at more than 500 U.S. adults. More than 25% of people with diabetes must inject themselves with insulin on a daily basis. All people with Type 1 diabetes and many people with Type 2 diabetes need insulin to manage their disease and to prevent or slow the progression of dangerous complications.

Risk factors of failing to comply with insulin regimens differed between those who had Type 1 and those who had Type 2 diabetes. The researchers found diet non-adherence to be a more prominent risk factor for missing injections in Type 1 patients. Yet the prominent risk factor for people with Type 2 was

### Norway Conquers Infections by Cutting Use of Antibiotics

The best way to cut down on infections is to reduce antibiotic use according to a study from Norway.

Norway's model is surprisingly straightforward:

- Norwegian doctors prescribe fewer antibiotics than any other country, so people do not have a chance to develop resistance to them.
- Patients with Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) are isolated and medical staff who tests positive stay home.
- Doctors track each case of MRSA by its individual strain, interviewing patients about where they've been and who they've been with, testing anyone who has been in contact with them.
- Norwegian doctors prescribe Tylenol to alleviate discomfort.

**Comment:** Around the world, various medical providers have successfully adapted Norway's program with encouraging results. A medical center in Billings, MT, cut MRSA infections by 89% by increasing screening, isolating patients, and making all staff - not just doctors - responsible for increasing hygiene. In 2001, the CDC approached a Veterans Affairs hospital in Pittsburgh, PA about conducting a small test program. It started in one unit, and within four years, the entire hospital was screening everyone who came through the door for MRSA. The result: an 80% decrease in MRSA infections. The program has now been expanded to all 153 VA hospitals, resulting in a 50% drop in MRSA bloodstream infections.

### Are You Over Spending on Pharmacy Benefit Costs?

### Want to Keep Drug Trend at Single Digit or Less?

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Our proven methodology is to integrate therapeutics with prudent business principles to achieve cost contraction as a result of improved quality management.

Savings accrue from Physician-accepted general education about Evidence-Based practice and information about the cost-effectiveness of competing medication.

younger age, lower income, perceived pain and embarrassment.

**Comment:** When patients or doctors want to increase quantity limits, question compliance first. Therapeutic life style changes and adherence are critical.

**MEET THE PROFESSOR...**

Craig Stern, PharmD, MBA President,  
Pro Pharma Pharmaceutical Consultants, Inc  
<http://www.propharmaconsultants.blogspot.com/>

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