

Pharmacy Benefit News

Issue # 307 | July 13th, 2017



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Increase in American Workers Testing Positive for Drugs

More U.S. workers are testing positive for illicit drugs than at any time in the last 12 years, according to recent data from Quest Diagnostics Inc., one of the largest workplace-testing labs in the nation. Alternatively, over 50% of States have declared marijuana as legal. The number of workers who tested positive for marijuana rose by 4%, while positive results for other drugs also rose. The increases come against a backdrop of more liberal marijuana state laws and an apparent resurgence in the use of drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine.

Commentary: The quandary here is the legalization of formerly illicit drugs. It is no surprise that marijuana has increased the most comparatively on urine drug screens. On the other hand, the one trend that has remained stagnant is opioids, perhaps due to the strong push back on opioid usage and prescribing, or a shift to other drugs which are easier to get. Is this a supply and demand issue, i.e., marijuana available, while opiates are discouraged? Then what is the response to fewer opiate prescriptions? Amphetamines and cocaine use is increasing, which can be attributed to increasing online drug market sales and prescription stimulant usage.

There is a concern with moving illicit drugs to the general population. The increasing popularity of marijuana may coincide with the growing concern over employee absenteeism and overall work productivity. Even though marijuana may be legal in almost half the states, many employers will still fire employees for testing positive. As a result, moving marijuana to legal status in States to allow for medicinal usage, also carries the concern that normal workplace productivity will be affected. Medicinal usage does not equal employee productivity. Hence, additional metrics must be placed on the legal usage of marijuana in States to ensure that there is no spillover into the non-medicinal employee workforce.

Reference: Weber, Lauren. "More American Workers Are Testing Positive for Drugs ." The Wall Street Journal 17 May 2017: n. pag. Print.

Analytics at Work: A Real World Example

Steps 1, 2 & 3

Problem: Several clients did not find the results of Retrospective Audits useful. Many clients also felt that the financial findings that identified problems with the PBMs were too hard to capture or were non-recoverable. As a result, Pro Pharma was presented with the problem of how to improve the Audit Process.

Methodology: Pro Pharma addressed the problem from several vantage points –

1. What was the reason for the Audit?

3. How would the results be used to improve management of the Plan?

Aside from corporate rationale and Sarbanes-Oxley motivations, the major concern was to use the information to manage the Plan better and at a lower trend. The current approach for reconciling invoices was to sum claims and paid amounts to compare against the invoice totals. The result, essentially was no information to use for managing the Plan. Pro Pharma used this information to digitize the entire Audit and make the results useful monthly, concurrently and at an affordable cost. The rationale for the Audit was to improve management and to direct changes to improve trend. The goals were designed to be both short and long-term in order to manage drivers of short-term and trend for long-term.

Outcomes:

The client then had point-of-sale results and accompanying analyses to use for –

1. Identifying the Current Situation for:
 - Cost accounting for every penny spent
 - Drivers of spend by demographics, geography, categories of medications, individual medication cost inflation
 - Trending results by spend, PMPM and PUPM to compare to national and peer results
2. Predictions
 - Predictions for future spending
 - Forecasting based on new entrants and demographic shifts
3. Outcomes based on quality and national metrics that were compared to targets for peer-to-peer improvements
4. Action Plans/Recommendations for managing drivers, trend, and the impact of new entrants

The result was an Audit that was both retrospective and prospective providing useful goals and objectives that could be prioritized and acted upon to achieve management initiatives.

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Opioid Addiction in the Hands Of Legislators

Congressional legislators have, and are currently addressing the problem of opioid addiction. This process was analyzed in a current study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. They analyzed 30 medical interventions categorized as: short interventions, recovery medication, behavioral counseling. It was determined in the study that all had a positive return on investment (ROI) by preventing future health-care costs and reducing opioid abuse rates and death.

Commentary: The problem with opioid addiction is not the cost of the medications itself, but also the cost of rehabilitation and other necessary steps to ensure a safe recovery, which burdens the healthcare system. Recent CDC guidelines articulate that when physicians prescribe opioids or other high abuse potential medications, the physician should minimize use in other than cancer and monitor the patient to ensure that the correct quantities are being taken on every follow up visit. If need be, routine drug screenings can be administered to minimize abuse potential of these medications.

Proactively working on the problem instead of reactively is not only easier, but can save up to \$36 for every dollar spent on preventative measures. Congress has implemented national guidelines to have quantity restrictions on opioids for those hospitals implementing these intervention programs. What is new and crucial is that there should be national guidelines for recovery programs or short interventions, to further solve the

Butterflies in Your Stomach? Or Is That Just Called Anxiety

As rates of anxiety disorders rise, researchers are working to find more effective treatments. In the meantime, what can sufferers do? With an estimated 18% of adults suffering from anxiety disorders in the United States, therapy and practice seem to be the most effective forms for individuals in this day and age.

Commentary: There are several different classes of medications available for individuals that suffer from anxiety disorders, but there is no "magic pill", that does not have addiction potential, works immediately, or cause other adverse effects. In spite of current treatments, anxiety seems to be increasing in high school students and young adults in college.

Why? Dwindling acceptance rates and increasing tuition costs put extra pressure on individuals that can lead to unnecessary stress, potentially leading to more health conditions down the road. Perhaps there are better diagnostic tools that indicate more anxiety than was previously identified. However, coping mechanisms and stress reduction should not be targeted just to young adults, but should begin much earlier, in order for adults to learn which mechanisms work best for them, and to be ready to deal with bigger problems in the near future and in their early adulthood.

Hence, this is not just a medication therapy problem. This is a combination of therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) that has been proven to be more effective than medications.

opioid problem in the United States. The bottom-line is that this is not just a drug problem, it is a societal problem that requires multiple modalities of intervention.

Reference: Gingrich, Newt, and Patrick Kennedy. "Congress Can Fight Opioid Addiction on Its Way Out." *The Wall Street Journal* 1 Dec. 2016: n. pag. Print.

should be short-term solutions to the problem until CBT can be delivered. CBT will foster these coping strategies for individuals with anxiety, and will help allow them live their lives with less adverse effects from anxiety down the road.

Reference: Petersen, Andrea. "My Escape From Anxiety." *The Wall Street Journal* 28 Apr. 2017: n. pag. Print.



PRODATA
ANALYTICS



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Invoice Screens™

Concurrent Audit and Analyses

Pro Pharma Invoice Screens™ targets Providers, Physicians, and Pharmacies responsible for rejected claims that did not meet contract requirements preadjudication by use of the "Three C's":

- Collecting -dollars from inappropriately paid claims
- Correcting - vendor claims processing mistakes
- Controlling - provider "abuse"

Review of biweekly PBM Pharmacy Invoices for Pre-Adjudication Claims can save 7-11% in overall drug spend. Coupled with Claims Review, these screens can also target the Providers, Physicians and Pharmacies responsible for rejected claims that did not meet contract requirements.

Savings for most clients are realized when Pharmacy Invoice Amounts are verified and Billing Details are Screened in the following areas:

*Formulary Compliance
Eligibility
Pricing/MAC Compliance
Invalid Claims
Excluded Benefits*

Benefits of Screening Invoices Every Two Weeks at Check Write:

- Turn-Around Time (TAT) is within one week of receipt complete data sets, to prevent payment on rejections*
- Peripheral Identification of Physician and Pharmacies responsible for outlier and/or for potential "abuse"*
- Put Dollars Back in Your Pockets Concurrently!*

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Pro Pharma Pharmaceutical Consultants, Inc. has assisted payers and providers for over 31 years to maintain quality while controlling costs.

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