

Suboptimal Medication Use and Adherence: The Intersection of Research, Implementation and Policy

Conference Overview

Appropriate medication use and adherence are key factors to help improve value in the shifting health care landscape. Recognizing this, more than 75 participants with diverse perspectives in health care research and policy convened in Washington, D.C., on December 5 –6, 2016, to share and discuss strategies to help improve medication adherence and overall health outcomes, identify areas for future research and collaboration, and recommend policy options to help achieve these goals. Because the cost and health consequences of medication non-adherence are well documented, after a brief situational level set and political outlook discussion, the focus of the conference shifted to a discussion on solutions. The participants set out to identify tactics and strategies based on scientific evidence that could inform the policy changes necessary to move the needle and attain significant improvements to medication use and optimize overall health outcomes.

About the Participants

A unique aspect of the conference was the intent to foster better understanding of challenges faced by stakeholders and encourage greater cross-functional dialogue and collaboration. Among the participants, nearly every facet of the medication use process was represented, including perspectives from patients, providers, payers and pharmaceutical companies. The group recognized that all stakeholders within the health care continuum have a role in optimizing medication use but that current barriers must be addressed in order for respective sectors to both maximize their roles and partner with others. Additionally, participants provided recommendations for the longer-term outlook on improving patients' health, beyond medication use or adherence. The goal of the participating stakeholders is to enhance health care and outcomes, while improving quality and decreasing health care cost – appropriate medication use is a critical component in achieving the triple aim.

Discussion Outcomes and Recommendations

The collective discussion and recommendations from the group coalesced around three high priority areas to address within health care in order to achieve high-value, effective care delivery where medication use can be optimized and health outcomes are achieved:

1. **Incentives:** Emerging health care payment models should emphasize incentives to promote delivery of high-value care and improved patient outcomes across all settings. Current incentive structures are misaligned and fail to encourage payers and providers to best use services or technology that could facilitate appropriate medication use (e.g., electronic prescribing). Health plans often view pharmacy and medical costs separately, perhaps missing opportunities to invest in medication use that can avoid future health complications and costly services. Other examples include investment and greater adoption of performance metrics or quality measures based on outcomes, rather than processes.
2. **Information:** There has been exponential growth in the availability of health care data over the past decade, but are we using it efficiently and effectively? While stakeholders have their individual data needs, how can we also collectively share this information in a way that meaningfully informs patient-centered care provided in a timely manner? Although each patient's care should be individualized, data collection can be standardized to determine the "who" and "what" as we begin to evaluate various interventions, as well as for triaging and appropriately

targeting patients. New devices and wearable technology also generate near real-time data, with the potential to provide greater insight into patient behavior and the effect of medications on clinical indicators in achieving goals of therapy outside of the health care setting. There is a need to use predictive analytics to segment individuals based on their needs, but also a need to integrate these data in an effective, efficient way. Information technology should be leveraged more holistically to help improve overall patient outcomes, including both the medical and pharmacy arms of the health care story.

3. **Integration:** A team-based approach with a holistic view of the patient through integrated data sharing will greatly accelerate and improve health care delivery. Both within health systems and community settings, better coordination and communication is needed to support patient-centered care. This can start with the inclusion of multi-disciplinary, inter-professional health care teams that optimize each provider's role based on their clinical training. The key to this will also be having access and insight into both medication use and health data to provide great context about a patient's overall status.

As a next step, participants will continue to consider the potential for new collaborative partnerships and begin to lay out an implementation roadmap for optimal medication use based on the priorities identified and recommendations to transform the health care landscape.

For more information on the organizations and to stay up to date or involved, please visit us at:

Medication Adherence Alliance: (<http://managingyourmeds.org>)

Prescriptions for a Healthy America: (<http://adhereforhealth.org>)

PhRMA Foundation: (<http://www.phrmafoundation.org>)