

Increasing physician referrals of patients with rheumatoid arthritis to a health-system based specialty pharmacy: a business plan

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PURPOSE: Rheumatology related illnesses are some of the leading causes of work disability according to the CDC¹. In 2013, the nation arthritis-attributable medical costs were \$140 billion, which includes ambulatory care and prescription costs, and the amount of lost wages was \$164 billion². The Valley Specialty Pharmacy was established in December 2019 to fill the need of a hospital-system based specialty pharmacy that will provide specialty service to patients. With the beginning of a new pharmacy, there have not been many specialty physician groups utilizing the services that the specialty pharmacy can offer outside of oncology. This research was designed to fill the gap in care and to increase prescription volume from the Valley Institute for Rheumatology and Autoimmune Diseases by implementing a pharmacist designed business plan.

OBJECTIVE: To increase prescription volume from The Valley Institute for Rheumatology and Autoimmune Diseases physicians to the Valley Specialty Pharmacy.

METHODS: The study will be a retrospective chart review to determine which patients were prescribed specialty rheumatology and autoimmune disease related medications that were sent to the Valley Specialty Pharmacy from the Valley Institute for Rheumatology and Autoimmune Diseases. The information that will be collected includes patient name, age, diagnosis, and medication to determine if the prescription is appropriate. The intervention is meeting with the rheumatology group, implementing a workflow that is in collaboration with the prior authorization coordinator from the rheumatology office, and creating physician and patient flyers for the specialty pharmacy. The primary outcome is the number of prescriptions for rheumatology from March 18, 2020 to June 3, 2020 (11 weeks).

RESULTS: It is anticipated that there will be an increase in physician referrals from the rheumatology group to the health-system based specialty pharmacy.

CONCLUSIONS: It is anticipated that by implementing a business plan there will be an increase in prescription volume to The Valley Health Pharmacy for rheumatology medications including specialty drugs.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control. Arthritis-Related Statistics. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics/arthritis-related-stats.htm Last reviewed July 2018.
2. Murphy, L.B., Cisternas, M.G., Pasta, D.J., Helmick, C.G. and Yelin, E.H. (2018), Medical Expenditures and Earnings Losses Among US Adults With Arthritis in 2013. *Arthritis Care Res*, 70: 869-876. doi:10.1002/acr.23425