01  Opioids and the Injured Worker – Finding a Balance Between Relieving Pain and Preventing Addiction

All too often we hear the alarming statistics of prescription drug addiction:

- More than 50% of patients on opioids for 3 months will still be on opioids 5 years later
- As many as 35% of patients with chronic pain have become addicted to their medication

As an industry leader, Express Scripts recognized this challenge as an opportunity to reach out to injured workers to educate them on the possible dangers and side effects of taking opioids. The Patient Narcotic Education program communicates with injured workers when they receive their first narcotic prescription. The program provides injured workers the appropriate information so they feel confident in taking the recommended dosage of their prescribed narcotic and helps them recognize the dangerous side effects that can often occur. A letter provides tips for safely taking narcotics and asks injured workers to contact their doctor if they have any questions or concerns.

This communication demonstrates our commitment to improving outcomes for all involved – keeping injured workers safe and free of prescription complications while lowering costs of unnecessary treatment for payers. Education through early intervention promotes injured worker safety and may prevent misuse and abuse of narcotics. Please contact your account team and ask about enrolling in the Patient Narcotic Education program.

02  2012 Drug Trend Report Shows Prescription Drug Utilization Declines

Even though overall drug trend rose 2.9% in 2012, Express Scripts’ industry-leading prescription management programs drove down utilization of prescription drugs for Workers’ Compensation payers, as reported in the 2012 Express Scripts Workers’ Compensation Drug Trend Report.

Narcotic analgesics – which once again accounted for the highest spend among therapy classes in Workers’ Compensation – saw utilization decline 2.7%. OxyContin® (oxycodone extended release) which accounted for nearly 10% of the total drug spend, had a 6.1% drop in utilization although it still represents the highest average cost per user at $132.50.

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The 2012 increase in overall trend—a combination of spending on drugs and utilization of drugs—reversed two years of decline. This increase was driven primarily by a 10% increase in cost per user for antidepressants and dermatologicals. Availability of new products and new product indications in these two classes greatly affected trend.

Tim Pokorney, pharmacist, and clinical director of Workers’ Compensation at Express Scripts, noted that the findings demonstrate the need for effective prescription drug management programs.

“Payers need innovative solutions that help them drive the use of clinically equivalent, cost-effective generics that can help rein in their overall pharmacy spending,” said Tim. “Express Scripts is uniquely positioned to offer payers better solutions by bringing together our complementary capabilities—the behavioral sciences, clinical specialization and actionable data.”

Programs that help control utilization include Oral Fentanyl Intervention and Long-Acting Narcotics Outreach to physicians. Express Scripts also offers step therapy, narcotics education (for injured workers and physicians), Drug Utilization Review (DUR), Physician Peer-to-Peer and formulary management programs.

One example of a product that helps manage trend for clients is a communication program that encourages injured workers to use lower-cost generic equivalents. The product is based on the findings of an Express Scripts Workers’ Compensation pilot. Injured workers were 60% more likely to choose a generic equivalent after receiving a letter explaining how their prescription drug choices could help control the rising cost of healthcare.

Preventing Abuse to Drive Down Costs

Express Scripts introduced in 2011 a comprehensive industry-first Fraud, Waste and Abuse program for workers’ compensation payers to better manage narcotic utilization. Narcotics comprise more than one-third of the cost and utilization in workers’ compensation. Payers need a focused approach to managing narcotic use, especially considering the potential for misuse and abuse.

“Our Fraud, Waste and Abuse program combines our unique data analytics with clinical expertise and investigative services in a proven solution that increases savings for payers and safety for injured workers by reducing narcotic misuse and abuse,” Tim said.

In the US, prescription drug overdoses result in 1.2 million emergency room visits and more than 15,000 deaths each year—a rate that exceeds that of cocaine and heroin combined.

“We look for patterns of behavioral red flags to find cases that may otherwise be missed,” he said. “We leverage thousands of tips each year as we continue to enhance our offering and constantly refine our algorithm and data identification process.”

Compliance Updates

The workers’ compensation landscape is frequently changing. As state guidelines and mandates are modified Express Scripts stays on top of these critical updates. We have a dedicated team of regulatory and compliance experts who help influence these regulations to the benefit of payers and also help our clients navigate the complexities of this landscape.
Alabama:
Adopts Changes to Pharmacy Fee Schedule

California:
Proposed State Reporting Penalty Language
The California Division of Workers’ Compensation (DWC) revised the proposed regulations providing administrative penalties for Workers’ Compensation Information System (WCIS) reporting violations. In October 2011, Senate Bill 826 was signed into law, amending sections §138.6 and §138.7 of the California Labor Code. The bill authorizes the California DWC to assess administrative penalties for claims administrators’ failure to comply with WCIS reporting requirements. [http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/DWCWCABForum/WCISRegulations.htm](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/DWCWCABForum/WCISRegulations.htm)

Colorado:
Adopts Changes to Medical Fee Schedule and Treatment Guidelines

Georgia:
Adopts Changes to Medical Fee Schedule

Idaho:
Proposal to Establish Medical Fees for Medications
The Idaho Industrial Commission proposes to amend Rule 17.02.09 Medical Fees. This action will result in the establishment of a consistent-rate fee schedule for prescription drugs dispensed to treat an injured worker, regardless of the dispensing location (i.e., physician-dispensed or pharmacy-dispensed). [http://adminrules.idaho.gov/bulletin/2012/10.pdf#page=431](http://adminrules.idaho.gov/bulletin/2012/10.pdf#page=431)

Michigan:
Adopts Repackaged Drug Language

Nevada:
Adopts Changes to Medical Fee Schedule

New Mexico:
Adopts Changes to Rules
The New Mexico Workers’ Compensation Administration (WCA) adopted changes to its rules governing the payment of claims, claims resolution and payments for medical services. [http://www.workerscomp.state.nm.us/pdf/rules/rule7.pdf](http://www.workerscomp.state.nm.us/pdf/rules/rule7.pdf)

New York:
Adopts Permanent Regulations for Pharmacy
The New York Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB) adopted rules (12 NYCRR Part 440 and 442), effective Nov. 28, 2012. These permanent regulations will replace the emergency regulations that have been routinely adopted. [http://www.wcb.ny.gov/content/main/wclaws/RecentlyAdopted/Part440and442.jsp](http://www.wcb.ny.gov/content/main/wclaws/RecentlyAdopted/Part440and442.jsp)

North Carolina:
Proposal to Establish Electronic Billing Rules

Vermont:
Proposed Changes to Medical Fee Schedule
The state of Vermont proposed changes to its Medical Fee Schedule Rule 40.000. [http://labor.vermont.gov/InfoCenter/PublicComment/tabid/1434/Default.aspx](http://labor.vermont.gov/InfoCenter/PublicComment/tabid/1434/Default.aspx)

Disclaimer: The information contained herein is general in nature and should not be construed as legal advice to be applied to any specific factual situation. As the law differs in each jurisdiction and may be interpreted or applied differently depending on your location or situation, you should consult a lawyer if you have any questions. Express Scripts is not providing legal advice.
.04 | Face-to-Face

Express Scripts proudly participates in many industry and client-specific events. Being in the field allows us to keep our finger on the pulse of the market and share insights that contribute to better clinical and financial outcomes. Here is a small sample of our recent participation in the industry.

- Workers’ Compensation Research Institute (WCRI) Annual Issues & Research Conference – Cambridge, MA
- National Rx Drug Abuse Summit, Orlando, FL
- Public Agency Risk Managers Association (PARMA) 2013 Conference – Palm Springs, CA, including a presentation by an Express Scripts Clinical Account Executive
- Keenan Summit Meeting – San Francisco & Los Angeles, including a presentation by an Express Scripts Clinical Account Executive
- Federal Workplace Conference & Expo (FWCE), National Harbor, MD

.05 | Team Spotlight

Tera Underwood, Account Manager

Tera Underwood joined Express Scripts in 2008 and transitioned to the Workers’ Compensation Account Management team in July 2009. She was the Account Manager for the Account Centric Team and lead the team with flying colors, building solid relationships with clients and sales managers. Tera then transitioned to a key account and impressed this client with her dedication to client satisfaction.

Recently Tera’s experience, knowledge and professionalism made her the obvious choice to assist one of our largest strategic clients. Although only managing this account for a short time, Tera is doing an outstanding job, earning praise from clients, leadership and peers.

“There are so many facets of this job, it never becomes monotonous,” Tera said. “I get to analyze data, advise my clients on opportunities to enhance injured worker safety and client savings and in general, just help my clients achieve their goals. We have superb customers and it’s an honor to serve them daily.”

Tera also acts as a mentor to new team members and is considered a team leader. She often volunteers to support the team whenever she is needed and sets a positive example by eagerly leading projects. As she shares her work ethic and knowledge to get the job done with client satisfaction at heart, Tera has become a key contributor to the overall workers’ compensation team.

References

1 Martin BC et al. J Gen Intern Med 2011; 26: 1450-57