Medication Adherence & Persistence

What is Medication Adherence?
The WHO defines medication adherence as the patient’s conformance with the provider’s recommendation with respect to timing, dosage, and frequency of medication-taking during the prescribed length of time.

What is Medication Persistence?
The duration of time a patient takes medication, from initiation to discontinuation of therapy.

Policies to improve medication persistence

• Medicare Part D should employ appointment-based medication synchronization for patients with multiple prescription medications.
  o Patients enrolled in a synchronization program exhibited adherence rates of 66.1-75.5% (depending on the drug class) versus 37-40.8% for those not enrolled.¹
  o Sync patients were 3.4 to 6.1 times more likely to adhere to their medication regimens.¹
  o Non-sync patients were 52-73% more likely to stop taking their chronic medications over 1 year (i.e. more likely to become non-persistence).¹

• Medicare should cover compliance-based packaging, which improves medication adherence and persistence.
  o The medication possession ratio for patients with reminder packaging was 80% versus 73% for those without.²
  o Proportion of days covered (PDC) was 76% (with reminder packaging) versus 63% without.²

• Pharmacy services should be included within care coordination models as they significantly improve adherence and persistence to medications, which results in healthier patients.
  o Pharmacy service interventions improved adherence from 61.2% to 96.9% in 6 months.³
  o Pharmacy serve interventions also maintained medication persistence at 95.5% versus 69.1% for those patients assigned to usual care.³
  o Patients with the pharmacy services also had significantly healthier blood pressures.³


Prescriptions for a Healthy America: Partnership for Advancing Medication Adherence is a campaign of the Council for Affordable Health Coverage • 1101 14th St, NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20005 • (202) 808-8855 www.adhereforhealth.org