



Prescriptions for a Healthy America

"A Partnership for Advancing Medication Adherence"

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New Initiative to Improve Medication Adherence Unveiled By Health Care, Consumer, Patient and Industry Leaders

National Survey Highlights Extent of Issue and Opportunities to Address It

Washington, DC (May 2, 2013) – A partnership representing patients, health care providers, pharmacy organizations, consumers and health care industry leaders announced a major new initiative today to help improve medication adherence rates. The group, which was formed to advance solutions that help reduce health care costs and improve patient health across the nation, also released the findings of a new national survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies.

“Working together, we will help advance achievable solutions to help improve medication adherence among patients of all ages, backgrounds and geographic locations,” said Joel White, executive director of the Council for Affordable Health Coverage. “Improving adherence will improve health, lower costs and make coverage more affordable. It is a national health care conversation that warrants the attention of policymakers and consumers alike. Going forward, we will work to implement a blueprint with the goal of addressing the issue head on.”

Among the key findings of the national survey:

- **Medication Non-Adherence is a Major Health Care Issue:** Nearly two-thirds of patients (64 percent) who take medication do not properly adhere to prescription regimens. A third of chronically-ill patients failed to do so at least once in the last month.
- **Patient Health and Adherence Are Inextricably Linked:** Nearly nine out of 10 patients who adhere to their prescription medications describe their health as “good” or “excellent,” while only 65 percent of patients with poor adherence report the same.

- **Knowing the Consequences Is a Motivating Factor:** More than 50 percent of Americans who take medications said that they would be more likely to take their medication as prescribed if they were more informed about the potential negative health consequences of non-adherence.
- **Clear Support Exists for Near-Term Solutions:** A number of potential policy solutions received broad support, including:
 - Providing clear and easy-to-to-understand information about prescription medication and how to take it properly (92 percent);
 - Improving information technology to give all of a patient’s doctors and health care providers an accurate, up-to-date list of medications filled by the patient (89 percent); and
 - Encouraging increased discussion between patients and doctors about medication (89 percent).

“The findings we are releasing today demonstrate that medication adherence is a critical and prevalent public health issue,” said pollsters Anna Greenberg of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Bill McInturff of Public Opinion Strategies. “At the same time, there is far-reaching support for policy solutions ranging from care coordination and increased communication to more direct engagement with patients.”

Medication adherence means that patients are taking their medications at the times, dosages, frequencies, and direction prescribed. Failure to do so results in negative health effects for patients and reduced effectiveness of treatment regimens.

“We have an unprecedented opportunity to help Americans live longer, more productive and healthier lives,” said Dr. Rebecca Jaffe, MD, board member of the American Academy of Family Physicians. “This begins with education and awareness, but will only be fully realized if we work together to enact meaningful public policy solutions to ensure Americans have the tools and information they need to adhere to doctor-prescribed medications. Nowhere is there a better opportunity to directly improve Americans’ health.”

“Poor medication adherence is a complex and widespread, national problem,” said Sally Greenberg, executive director of the National Consumers League. “There are many different reasons why people don’t take their medicine as directed, from concerns about side effects to the out-of-pocket costs of prescriptions. But the consequences for patients are the same. Poor adherence puts patients, especially those with chronic conditions, at risk for serious complications. Educating the public and encouraging dialogue with their health care professionals, are important steps toward improving medication adherence in our country.”

Across the nation, tens of thousands of people die every year due to poor medication adherence. Research published in the journal *Health Affairs* found that emergency room visits and hospitalizations increase by more than 10 percent for diabetics who fail to take their medicines as prescribed, and hospitalizations increase for non-adherent patients with congestive heart failure, hypertension and dyslipidemia. In addition, improving medication adherence can reduce state and federal health care spending. The cost of non-adherence has been estimated at \$100 billion to \$300 billion annually, including costs from hospitalizations, nursing home admissions, and premature deaths.

“We all share the common goal of providing patients with the highest quality of care, and that goal drives this effort,” said John J. Castellani, President and CEO of PhRMA. “As we focus on advancing research and new medicines, our industry will continue to highlight solutions such as improved medication adherence that help strengthen better health outcomes and control health care costs.”

The partnership will work closely with elected officials and other key stakeholders to develop policies that help physicians, pharmacies, and other health care practitioners support patients’ medication adherence as a critical part of any wellness or disease management plan.

Led by the Council for Affordable Health Coverage, the organizations launching Prescriptions for a Healthy America: A Partnership for Advancing Medication Adherence include: American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Heart Association, American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association, American Osteopathic Association, AstraZeneca, CVS/Caremark, Easter Seals, GlaxoSmithKline, Healthcare Compliance Packaging Council, Healthcare Leadership Council, MeadWestvaco, Merck, Mirixa Corp, National Association of Chain Drug Stores, National Consumers League, National Council for Community and Behavioral Health, National Council for Prescription Drug Programs, National Council on Aging, National Council on Patient Information and Education, National Pharmaceutical Council, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, Patient Centered Primary Care Collaborative, Pharmaceutical Care Management Association, PhRMA, Third Way, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

For a full copy of the survey results, visit www.adhereforhealth.org.

Prescriptions for a Healthy America: A Partnership for Advancing Medication Adherence is comprised of organizations representing patients, health care providers, pharmacy organizations, consumers and health care industry leaders. The goal of the partnership is to educate lawmakers about the dangers and costs of not taking medication as prescribed, as well as develop and implement public policy solutions that will reduce the level of medicine non adherence nationwide. For more information on the partnership, visit adhereforhealth.org.

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Quotes from Partnership Members:



"Poor medication adherence is a serious problem that impacts the health of our members and increases overall health care costs but by working together the health care community can find solutions," said Anita Allemand, Vice President Product Innovation and Management of CVS Caremark. "This is why we have joined Prescriptions for a Healthy America. Together we hope to find commonsense solutions to improve medication adherence. CVS/Caremark is already engaged on the front lines to make a difference. For example, we have invested in research with key academic partners to better understand why people take or don't take their medications and are actively working to identify and implement innovative solutions across our business that can improve adherence."



"At a time when the health care world is focused on increasing the value of care while reducing the cost, there are few actions with more impact than medication adherence," said Randall L. Rutta, Chief Strategic Officer and Executive Vice President, Easter Seals. "The investment in prescriptions can have the greatest impact when medication is used correctly and correct use can be achieved through supporting better communication and coordination between individuals and their health care team. Efforts to make these improvements can only reap benefits."



"People who take their medication as prescribed may have a better chance of living healthier lives," said Michael Rosenblatt, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer at Merck. "We think patients, providers, lawmakers and companies like Merck all must play a part in improving patient education and health literacy, care coordination and medication management, which can lead to improved adherence. At Merck we are applying the same scientific rigor to studying medication adherence as we bring to discovering new treatments."



"Employers can play a critical role in highlighting the benefits of medication adherence as part of comprehensive chronic disease management programs," said Bruce Josten, executive vice president for Government Affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Ensuring a focus on initiatives like this can help lower unnecessary costs incurred by avoidable and foreseeable complications, which will improve health, reduce preventable hospitalization and increase productivity."



"Medication adherence is a complicated, global problem and we recognize the importance of working together to build solutions that complement each other as part of effective adherence programs," said Bruce Thomas, president, MWV Healthcare. "Through scientific research, we understand that packaging can improve medication adherence and we're seeing that it is effective when used alone, and even more so as part of a broader adherence program."



"Improving medication adherence - and ultimately improving health outcomes - requires a coordinated, multi-stakeholder adherence action agenda, at the heart of which are broad health policy changes, like those being advanced by the Prescriptions for a Healthy America Partnership," said Ray Bullman, Executive Vice President of the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE).



"There is real momentum building in the health care system for improving the use of medicines and medication adherence," said Tom Hubbard, Vice President of Policy for NEHI, a national health policy institute. "Now we need to create a fully supportive policy environment in Washington."



"Empowering patients to follow through on recommended treatment is critical to improving health. We are proud to support the Partnership for Advancing Medication Adherence," said Ken Thorpe, Chair, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.



May 2, 2013

Lack of Medication Adherence Harms Americans' Health

Results from a U.S. National Survey of Adults

To: Interested Parties
From: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research
Public Opinion Strategies

A recent poll of American adults shows that nearly two-thirds of Americans who take prescription medications are non-adherent, meaning they are not taking their medications as prescribed by their doctors. This has real implications on Americans' health. Almost half of all Americans have one or more chronic disease¹ with effective medications available for many of these conditions. Those patients who report not taking their medications as prescribed report poorer health than those who always take medicines properly.

People taking medications face many challenges, such as consistent timing, interactions with food or other medicines taken, and not understanding why they need to take their medicine as prescribed. However, there are opportunities to make it easier for Americans with chronic conditions to adhere to their prescription regimens, improving their quality of life and health outcomes. These opportunities include increasing communication between patients and health care professionals about taking medications as prescribed and the consequences of not doing so, better coordination of care, providing more information about medications, and improving access to tools that can help those taking medications remember to take them properly.

¹ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Chronic Disease: Making the Case for Ongoing Care*. February 2010. Available at: www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=50968.

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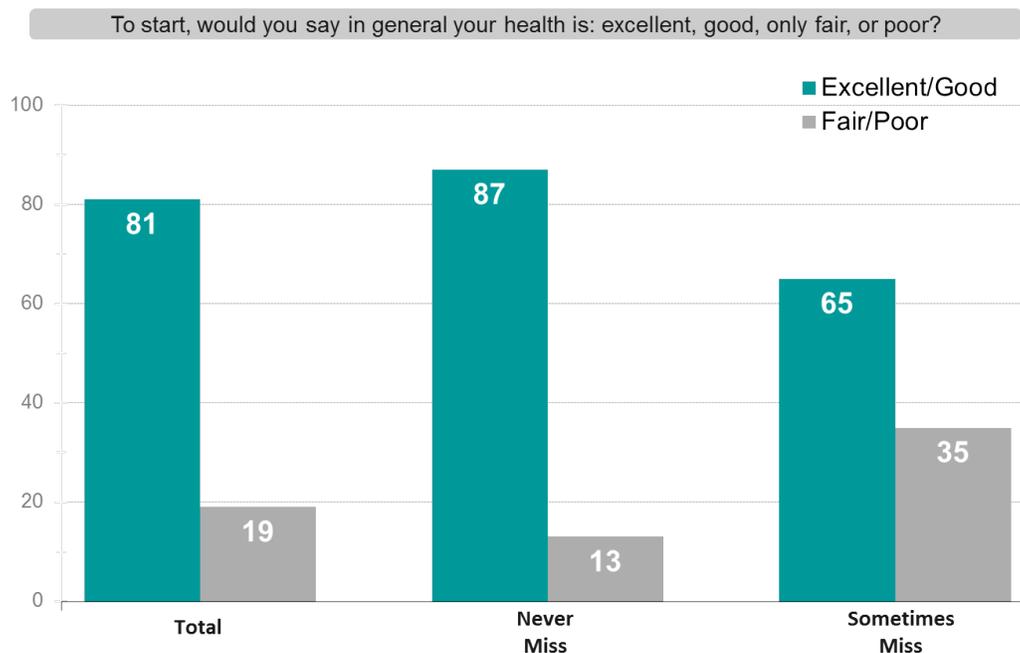
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The results in this memo are based on a national poll of adults, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies for the Council for Affordable Health Coverage. The survey reached a total of 800 adults and was conducted April 3 – 9, 2013. The margin of sampling error for the sample is +/- 3.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

Key findings from the survey include:

- **Nearly two-thirds of Americans who take medications do not take them properly.** Sixty-four percent of Americans who take medications report that they are not always taking their medications as prescribed, while only 33 percent say they never miss taking their prescription medications². Those who face the challenge of managing multiple medications are most likely to not adhere; 70 percent of individuals who take 3 or more medications do not take them properly, compared to 56 percent among those with 1 or 2 prescription medications.
- **Individuals who don't take their medications properly report feeling less healthy than those who take their medications as prescribed.** Those who take their medicines as prescribed are much more likely to report feeling excellent or good about their own health (87 percent) compared to those who don't always take medications (65 percent).

■ Figure 1 – Medication Adherence vs. Health



² These respondents are defined as those who say they: they have difficulty remembering to take their medication all of the time, usually, sometimes, once in a while, or rarely AND those respondents who said they did not take their medication the way it was prescribed today, days ago, weeks ago, months ago, or a year or more ago.

- **Americans are supportive of making tools available to help individuals adhere to their medication regimen.** The majority of Americans say the changes and proposals we tested can be effective in making it easier for those managing chronic conditions to adhere to their medications. They view a few recommendations as most likely to be effective:
 - Increase one on one communication between patients and health care professionals about medications and the consequences of not taking them as prescribed (89 percent effective) and give clear information about the individuals' medications (92 percent effective).
 - Improve coordination of care and information on medications. This includes changes that can help patients sync up refills for multiple prescriptions at the same time (87 percent effective), as well as better information technology that allows all of a patient's health care providers accurate information about the patient's filled prescriptions (89 percent effective).
 - Provide access to tools that help those taking medications remember to take their medications properly, including things like pill boxes and applications for mobile phones to help track medications (86 percent effective) or email and phone reminders (77 percent effective).



About Prescriptions for a Healthy America

Approximately 145 million Americans live with a chronic disease and prescription medications play a critical role in helping them live longer, healthier and more productive lives. Unfortunately, millions of Americans do not adhere to prescribed treatment plans, which often results in poor health outcomes and higher health care costs. This worsens health for those with chronic illness such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. As many as two out of three medication-related U.S. hospital admissions¹, tens of thousands of deaths and at least \$100 billion in hospital admissions are a direct result of poor medication adherence.

A recent national poll by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Public Opinion Strategies further revealed the following:

- **Medication Non-Adherence is a Major Health Care Issue:** Nearly two-thirds of patients (64 percent) who take medication do not fully adhere to prescription regimens. A third of patients taking medication for chronic illness missed at least one day's worth of medication in the past month.
- **Patient Health and Adherence Are Inextricably Linked:** Nearly nine out of ten patients who adhere to their prescription medications describe their health as "good" or "excellent," while two thirds of patients with poor adherence report the same.
- **Knowing the Consequences Is a Motivating Factor:** Fifty-eight percent of adults taking medication said that they would be more likely to take their medication as prescribed if they were more educated about the potential negative health consequences of non-adherence.
- **Clear Support Exists for Near-Term Solutions:** A number of potential policy solutions receive broad patient support, including:
 - Providing clear and easy to understand information about prescription medications and how to take them properly (92 percent support)
 - Improving information technology to give all of a patient's doctors and health care providers an accurate, up-to-date list of medications filled by a patient (89 percent)
 - Encouraging increased discussion between patients and doctors about medication (89 percent)

Prescriptions for a Healthy America: A Partnership for Advancing Medication Adherence was convened to raise awareness of the growing challenges posed by this non-adherence and to develop consensus-based policy solutions to address it. By bringing together leading patient,

¹ Osterberg L, Blaschke T, "Adherence to Medication," *New Engl. J. Med.*, 2005;353(5):487-497.

physician and health care industry leaders, the partnership is committed to advancing solutions that will help reduce health care costs and improve the lives of patients across the nation.

Steering Committee:

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Heart Association
- CVS Caremark
- Easter Seals
- Merck
- National Association of Chain Drug Stores
- National Consumers League
- PhRMA
- Third Way
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Sustaining Member:

- GlaxoSmithKline

General Member:

- American Academy of Ophthalmology
- American Osteopathic Association
- AstraZeneca
- Healthcare Compliance Packaging Council
- Healthcare Leadership Council
- MeadWestVaco
- National Council for Community and Behavioral Health
- National Council for Prescription Drug Programs
- National Pharmaceutical Council
- Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease
- Pharmaceutical Care Management Association

Partners:

- American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association
- Mirixa Corp
- National Council on Aging
- National Council on Patient Information and Education
- Patient Centered Primary Care Collaborative



What is medication adherence?

When patients take their medications at the prescribed times, dosages, frequencies, and other directions, they are “adherent.” Failure to adhere reduces the effectiveness of treatments which results in worse health outcomes and increased health care costs. A recent national poll by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies found that nearly two-thirds of patients taking medicine do not adhere to prescribed regimens.

The health consequences of not taking medication as prescribed can be serious. Patients are prone to complications from uncontrolled diseases, decreased overall well-being or worse – over one hundred thousand die annually due to poor medication adherence. Specifically, non-adherence also increases the likelihood of preventable disease progression, increased hospitalizations, avoidable doctor and emergency room visits, and other problems arising from poor health. By improving medication adherence, we can reduce state and federal health care spending (one study shows the cost of non-adherence has been estimated at \$100 to \$300 billion annually¹), as well as help patients live longer and healthier lives.

Adhering to prescribed medication also has immediate benefits. Nearly nine out of ten patients who adhere to their medication regimen describe their health as “good” or “excellent”, while only 65 percent with poor adherence say the same.¹

As policymakers consider ways to drive cost savings and improve the quality of health care, the issue of medication adherence will gain prominence as a key part of the solution.

What can be done about it?

Pharmacies, hospitals, and health plans have implemented various interventions and care improvements to increase medication adherence rates. Due to complex social, financial and behavioral issues, one intervention may work for a subset of patients yet prove ineffective for another. With 58 percent of patients taking medication reporting that they would be more likely to take their medication as prescribed if they were more informed about the potential negative health consequences of non-adherence, it is clear there is an opportunity to drive meaningful change.²

The partnership believes an integral part of any solution is the use of incentives to improve medication adherence. In particular, new care delivery and payment models should create a structural framework to reward a broad range of healthcare providers (e.g., physicians, nurses, pharmacists) and health plans that improve outcomes and lower costs.

¹ NEHI Research Brief. “Thinking Outside the Pillbox: A System-wide approach to Improving Patient Medication Adherence for Chronic Disease.” 2009.

² Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and Public Opinion Strategies. “Medication Adherence: A survey of adults nationwide.” Apr 2013.

What is the partnership's role in finding a solution?

We will work closely with elected officials and other key stakeholders to develop policies that help health plans, patients, employers, doctors, pharmacies and other health care practitioners support patients' medication adherence as a critical part of any treatment plan. We believe there are five key public policy issues that should be addressed by Congress and the administration.

Members of the partnership will seek legislation and programs that improve medication adherence in the following ways:

1. **Care Coordination and Comprehensive Medication Management** – Efforts to improve care coordination should recognize the important role that medications play in treating and managing illnesses and the need for care teams to include a broad range of clinicians (e.g., physicians, nurses, pharmacists) and health plans to engage the patient and other caregivers in developing and executing the care plan.

2. **Quality Measurement and Performance Improvement** – National quality improvement strategies should explicitly recognize that medication adherence and effective use of medicines are critical to improving health care quality and clinical outcomes across a broad range of therapy areas.

3. **Health Information Technology** – Health information technology and related standards must improve the flow of timely and complete information among providers and between patients and providers, facilitate patient engagement in their care, and enable clinicians and payers to identify and address gaps in patients' medication use.

4. **Patient/Provider Education and Engagement** – Strategies to improve medication adherence must fully engage patients and incorporate their treatment goals and preferences. Strategies should also help patients better understand their conditions and treatments. Critical to the success of medication adherence strategies is encouraging clinicians to: implement best practices for medication adherence; effectively communicate to their patients the importance of following treatment plans; and provide medication support services to patients and family caregivers.

5. **Research Efforts** – There is a need for additional research on medication adherence, including a focus on: the effectiveness of interventions to improve adherence; improved research methods and uniform metrics for assessing the impact of various adherence interventions; and the evaluation of transferability of successful interventions to broader patient populations and settings.