

Addressing the Challenges of Prescription Management

How Technology Drives Better Prescription Management Outcomes



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Proper medication management is key to driving healthy outcomes. Refill interruptions and mismanagement have overwhelmingly negative consequences for, not only your patients, but on the entire healthcare system and the economy. While the benefits of efficient and accurate prescription refills are clear, there are many challenges that providers face that can make it easier said than done. These issues only compound as the amount of prescriptions increases.

Modern technologies can offer pharmacies and providers some welcome relief. Automated digital communications can help you overcome some of the most significant challenges, ensuring your patients are properly informed and have the medications they need.



Challenges of Prescription Refill Management

Patient Compliance

An estimated 42% to 71% of physician office visits result in the prescribing of at least one medication, and medication compliance is key to driving healthy outcomes. Noncompliance not only negatively affects the healthcare system but is a substantial economic burden. An estimated cost between \$100 and \$300 billion annually in the United States has been attributed to medication noncompliance. And one of the main contributors to noncompliance is polypharmacy.

Polypharmacy is considered the use of five or more medications. Since older adults are the largest consumers of medication in the United States, polypharmacy issues are particularly prevalent in the elderly homebound population. In fact, one study found that 47.9% of homebound patients took five or more prescribed medications. Another study found the median number of medications in the homebound population was 17.

“People are living longer, but that does not necessarily mean that they are living healthier. The increase in our aging population presents many opportunities and also several public health challenges that we need to prepare for.”

National Institute on Aging (NIA) Director Richard J. Hodes, MD

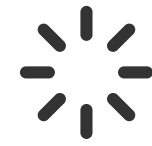


Noncompliance among older patients places a huge strain on the healthcare system. Approximately 30% of hospital admissions of elderly patients are attributed to taking prescriptions incorrectly, with greater than 11% related to medication nonadherence. Older adults prescribed more than five medications at discharge from the hospital are also more likely to visit the emergency department and require readmission during the first six months after discharge.

This issue will only get worse as the population ages. According to the 2020 Census Report issued by the United States Census Bureau, one in six of the population were 65 or over. Overall, polypharmacy increases the risk of negative outcomes such as falls, disability, frailty, and mortality in older adults.

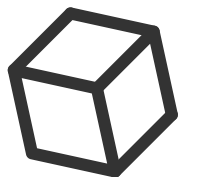


Patient Education



The absence of information drives consumers to external resources to find answers to medical questions. Good or bad, this has become a reality in today's world. The answers to your patients' questions are only a Google search away, and there is no shortage of misinformation, conspiracy theories, and scare tactics about healthcare online. While there are undoubtedly useful internet resources, identifying good information from bad information is challenging and often creates confusion for the average consumer.

Medication nomenclature has further increased consumer confusion. Many drugs have brand and generic versions, and pharmacy formularies may vary with generic versions of brand medication. When the time comes to refill and a patient is presented with multiple names for a single medication, confusion and frustration often result.





Patient education is instrumental in facilitating refill management. Providing medication education at every point of care empowers the patient to take ownership of their own well-being. This is especially critical in the setting of polypharmacy. An individual is more apt to take their medications as prescribed when they understand the scope of the therapy intended and the resultant benefits to gain from adherence. This serves as another opportunity to grow a loyal customer base while providing an invaluable service.



Decreased Care Efficiency

Office visits and telephone communications dedicated to prescription management consume a large portion of provider resources. Time and resources dedicated to managing prescriptions strain providers who now have to field questions about prescriptions. One study found that 31% of all telephone calls received to a primary care physician's office resulted in a prescription and of these, 44.9% involved refills of established prescriptions.


Streamlining resources improves outcomes and helps busy pharmacy and physician practices be more efficient with their time. Automatic messages keep patients abreast of their medication refill status, resulting in fewer calls made to the pharmacy. The reduction of phone interruptions gives pharmacy personnel the ability to concentrate on prescription processing and connect with their customers face-to-face.





The Need for Better Prescription Management

Chronic conditions afflict approximately half of all adults and about 8% of children aged 5 to 17 worldwide. This, along with an aging population, has created a strain on healthcare resources. Disruptions in pharmacy refills negatively impact the healthcare system as a whole. Nonadherence to prescribed therapies is not only associated with increased morbidity and mortality but also higher rates of hospitalizations.

An illustration of a hand holding a magnifying glass over a blister pack of capsules. The hand is stylized with a red sleeve and a white cuff. The magnifying glass is focused on one of the capsules. The blister pack is light blue and contains several capsules, each with a dark blue half and a red half. The background is a light blue gradient.

Nonadherent patients are at particular risk of worsening conditions resulting in emergency room visits and hospitalizations. These untreated chronic conditions may present to acute care facilities in deconditioned, dire states. Treating high-acuity patients places an additional burden on hospital resources, leading to provider fatigue and burnout. On the primary care front, nonadherence may result in unplanned visits to their doctors, placing additional burdens on full clinic schedules.

An individual's quality of life, as well as their longevity, are contingent upon appropriate and consistent pharmaceutical therapy. A stable, consistent management of refills provides an individual with the opportunity to optimize their health.

**“Drugs don’t work
in patients who
don’t take them.”**

C. Everett Coop, MD, former US Surgeon General

Modern Technologies Ease the Burden

Modern advancements in refill delivery systems provide a promising solution to both providers and consumers. As medicine converges with technology, there is tremendous opportunity to improve the lives of consumers and increase their satisfaction. In order to increase medication compliance and ultimately drive optimal patient outcomes, strategies employing information technology tools can be utilized to improve communication before and after office visits.

Historically, pharmacy refill management has fallen largely on the patient. Refills typically were initiated by a call or in-person visit to the pharmacy by the patient. This paradigm has shifted and now engages the entire healthcare team in refill management. Electronic interventions have been key to helping providers improve patient compliance as well as provider resource utilization.

Opt-in text messages delivered to patients serve as “nudge” reminders. Patients who are at increased risk of nonadherence, such as the elderly, particularly benefit from phone reminders. Text message reminders have also been found to be a feasible, actionable step for providers to facilitate medication adherence.

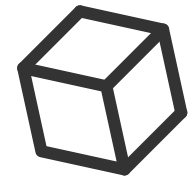
People are busy. We all tend to get lost in the day-to-day and lose track of important tasks. Refill reminders are an added security the customer can rely on to maintain their health. These notifications of refill status also allow the pharmacy personnel to prepare for the customer’s arrival. This controlled pickup process results in more efficient pharmacy operations and a happy customer.





Electronic communications may also benefit the consumer by synchronizing multiple prescription renewals. Medication synchronization coordinates cyclical prescriptions into a one-stop shopping trip to the pharmacy. This saves patients from making multiple trips to the pharmacy, which further improves customer experience. It sends the message to the patient that their time is important. In addition, it eliminates the need for patients to remember multiple refills. These programs have been found to improve medication adherence.

ContactEngine provides the tools for healthcare providers to address their patient needs while facilitating their internal processes. Our unique conversational AI platform is a friendly helper that enhances the patient experience by providing critical reminders to maintain optimum health. As practices grow and prescription management accelerates, ContactEngine offers a proactive and efficient system to connect with your customer to ensure their health comes first. We help you deliver a timely, efficient, accurate, and friendly prescription experience by providing the bridge to connect with your customer to maintain a cohesive, seamless refill experience.





Learn more about ContactEngine

**Contact us and let us help
you drive better prescription
management outcomes.**



About ContactEngine

ContactEngine is a Conversational AI technology that enables companies to proactively engage customers in conversations that fulfil business objectives. ContactEngine automates outbound customer engagement across all channels and generates unique insights into the changing patterns of communication by applying demographic and intent analysis, linguistics and ground-breaking artificial intelligence principles to mass volumes of raw data. For more information about ContactEngine, please visit www.contactengine.com/insights