SCRIPT YOUR FUTURE

Patients Struggle Adhering to Their Medications



- Half of Americans fail to take their medication as prescribed[1]
- Nearly one-third of prescriptions written by primary care physicians are never filled[2]
- 10% of patients have skipped doses to save medicine and money[3]

Each year in the US, medication nonadherence accounts for up to:[4]

125,000
deaths

25%
of hospitalizations

50%
of failed treatments

300
billion in additional costs

Why?

There are many reasons patients may struggle to adhere to their medication, including:

- Insurance Barriers
- High Costs
- Misinformation
- Stigma
- Transportation Challenges
- Language Barriers
- Drug Shortages
- Pharmacy Deserts

[1] https://www.psqh.com/analysis/the-impact-of-cost-on-medication-adherence/
[2] https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24687067/
[3] https://westhealth.org/news/18-million-americans-cant-pay-for-needed-meds/
[4] https://www.uspharmacist.com/article/medication-adherence-the-elephant-in-the-room

How Pharmacists Can Help:

Patients trust their pharmacists — 80% consider pharmacists integral to their care team,[5] and 61% want to receive more care from them.[6] Pharmacists are well-positioned to help patients overcome real-world barriers to taking medication, an approach shown to be more effective than only educating patients about why medications should be taken as directed.[7]

- Talk to patients about whether they take their medications as prescribed, and if not, why:
  - "Why are you having trouble taking your medication?"
  - "Is the medication regimen too complex?"
  - "Do you understand why the doctor prescribed this?"
  - "What did the doctor say to expect (e.g., any side effects)?"
- Problem solve together
  - Link taking the medication to a daily activity (e.g., "Would setting the pill bottle next to your coffee maker be helpful?")
  - Use reminders via phone alerts or habit apps
  - Connect patients with patient assistance programs for lower-cost medications
- Simplify medications
  - Consolidate refills for pick up at the same time
    - The National Community Pharmacists Association offers a program to members to support this: Simplify My Meds[8]
  - Talk to the prescriber about lower-cost generics or easier-to-take medications
- Extend support beyond the pharmacy
  - Set up pharmacist office hours or screenings with community partners, such as churches and community centers
  - Offer medication-adherence clinics
  - Visit patients at home to help manage their medications

About *Script Your Future*[9]

Launched in 2011 and led by the National Consumers League (NCL), *Script Your Future* is a national consumer education campaign that raises awareness about the importance of medication adherence as a vital first step toward better health outcomes. As part of the campaign, NCL works with schools of pharmacy across the nation on a Team Challenge, which is a three-month community outreach campaign to raise awareness about medication adherence and implement creative solutions.

[5] https://www.pharmacist.com/Blogs/CEO-Blog/Article/most-patients-see-pharmacists-as-crucial-part-of-their-health-care-team
[6] https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/news/us-survey-signals-big-shifts-in-primary-care-to-pharmacy-and-clinic-settings
[7] https://www.pharmacytimes.com/view/ask-the-right-questions-to-improve-medication-adherence
[8] https://ncpa.org/simplify-my-meds
[9] https://scriptyourfuture.org

NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE
National Consumers League
1701 K Street, NW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20006
Visit us online at nclnet.org.