

## Up Front

### Solving the Adherence Problem in Economic Hard Times

Medication non-adherence—ie, patients not taking their medications as prescribed by their doctors—is one of the most significant problems in healthcare. The New England Healthcare Institute (NEHI), a nonprofit research organization with ties to the pharmaceutical industry, health insurers and academia, estimates that between one-third and one-half of all patients in the U.S. do not take their medications as prescribed by their doctors.

Non-adherence is responsible for over \$150 billion in lost pharmaceutical revenues per year, not to mention an estimated \$290 billion in otherwise avoidable medical spending in the US per year. Up to 25% of prescriptions are never filled, and average medication compliance, for people who do fill their prescriptions, is only about 50% for most chronic diseases.

The recent economic downturn has exacerbated the problem according to a recent survey conducted by Consumer Reports (see <http://bit.ly/d7KLuQ>). That survey of over 2,000 random adults showed that consumers are economizing on healthcare by cutting corners in ways that may be dangerous. According to this survey, in the past year,

- 27% failed to comply with prescriptions, citing economic reasons; non-compliance was most prevalent among patients under the age of 65 without a drug benefit (46%), patients with a household income under \$40,000 (34%), patients aged 18-54 years (33%), and patients whose monthly out-of-pocket Rx spending was greater than \$50 (33%).
- The most common actions reported to save money on medications: skipped filling a prescription (16% overall, 38% among those younger than 65 without drug coverage), taken an expired medication (12%), skipped a scheduled dosage (12%), cut prescribed pills in half (8%), and shared a prescription with someone else to save money (4%).



The adherence problem has long plagued the drug industry and economics is certainly part of the reason why patients don't take their medication as prescribed. Other reasons, according to NEHI, include:

- side effects
- the challenge of managing multiple prescriptions (polypharmacy)
- patients' understanding of their disease
- forgetfulness
- cultural and belief systems
- imperfect drug regimens
- patients' ability to navigate the health care system
- cognitive impairments
- a reduced sense of urgency due to asymptomatic conditions

All of which means that the problem cannot simply be solved by lowering drug costs, which is what Consumers Union is focused upon in its survey. And there is no one "magic bullet" that will solve the problem.

This month's *Pharma Marketing News* includes several articles that feature innovative solutions to the adherence problem. In preparation for these articles, several experts will be guests on the Pharma Marketing BlogTalkRadio Show during the month of September (see next page for details). PMN subscribers and site visitors are invited to listen in LIVE to these shows and participate in the conversation by calling (347) 996-5894. You can also listen to the live streaming audio via the Web or ask questions in an online chat room (you must be a registered user of BlogTalkRadio to participate in the chat).

*Turn to next page for links to upcoming Pharma Marketing Talks shows featuring non-adherence solutions...*

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## Upcoming Pharma Marketing Talk Shows Featuring Non-Adherence Solutions

Thurs, **Sept 9, 2010** \* 2 PM Eastern US

**Eyes on the Adherence Prize:** *How HealthPrize Uses Financial Incentives and Fun to Change Patient Behavior*



A conversation with Tom Kottler, CEO, and Katrina S. Firlik, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, HealthPrize, about the company's innovative,

compelling approach to solving one of pharma's most perplexing puzzle: how to improve medication adherence.

More details/listen: <http://bit.ly/PMTAdherePrize>

Thurs, **Sept 23, 2010** \* 2 PM Eastern US

**Improving Patient Outcomes:** *Engaging Patients to Improve Adherence*



A conversation with several speakers from eyeformpharma's 7th Annual Patient Adherence & Engagement Summit. We will discuss the issues related to the latest strategies to boost adherence and improve patient health outcomes, especially from a patient's point of view.

More details/listen: <http://bit.ly/PMTPatOutcome>

Tues, **Sept 14, 2010** \* 2 PM Eastern US

**Closed-Loop Patient Education:** *MedTera and HealthPrize Team Up to Improve Medication Adherence & Health Outcomes*



A conversation with David Duplay, President of MedTera, and Tom Kottler,

CEO, HealthPrize, and Katrina S. Firlik, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, HealthPrize, about how the two companies are working together to combine closed-loop marketing, patient education, and incentives to improve medication adherence and health outcomes.

More details/listen: <http://bit.ly/PMTCLoopPatEd>



**John Mack, Editor**



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### LISTENING OPTIONS

**LIVE:** Visit <http://bit.ly/PMTBTR> and select the show you want to listen to via live streaming audio or Call 1-347-5894 to listen AND participate/ask questions.

**PODCAST:** After the show an audio podcast archive is available via iTunes: <http://bit.ly/PMTiTunes>

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