

HealthPrize Teams Up with RealAge to Improve Adherence

High Engagement in Reward Program Among Asthma/COPD Patients

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To learn more about this study or how HealthPrize can be implemented, customized and/or partnered with your organization, visit www.healthprize.com or call 203-604-6820.

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Unless taken, medicines don't work. That's how Michael Rosenblatt, M.D., Chief Medical Officer at Merck, expressed it in a comment to a *Wall Street Journal Health* blog post. The post reported on a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* that demonstrated how difficult it is to get people to take their medications—in this case, osteoporosis drugs by Medicare recipients (see "Getting People to Take Their Osteoporosis Drugs is Tough"; <http://on.wsj.com/yrd0IM>).

Good adherence to prescription medicines not only improves health outcomes, it also can help control health care costs, which was demonstrated by another study sponsored by PhRMA.

That research showed that Medicare Part D has increased beneficiaries' access to medicines and "thereby brought down overall non-drug Medicare costs by preventing hospitalizations and other costly medical care," reported Greg Lopes in a PhRMA blog post (see "New PhRMA Paper Shows Value of Medicines in our Health Care System"; <http://bit.ly/wHAea2>).

PhRMA also cited a 2010 National Bureau of Economic Research report, which concluded that the hospitalization rate and the number of days spent in the hospital were 23 percent and 24 percent lower, respectively, for patients who took their medicines (see Figure 1, below). Annual spending on prescription medicines was \$776 higher per adherent patient, but

each patient saved \$886 in averted hospital costs, for a net savings of \$110 per diabetic patient per year.

A CVS Caremark study published in the January 2011 issue of *Health Affairs* demonstrated even greater savings. That study concluded that adherence reduced the net (after deducting increased pharmacy costs) average annual medical spending per patient by \$7,823 in congestive heart failure, \$3,908 in hypertension, \$3,757 in diabetes, and \$1,259 in dyslipidemia ("Medication Adherence Leads To Lower Health Care Use And Costs Despite Increased Drug Spending"; *Health Affairs*, 30, no.1 (2011):91-99).

So why is it so difficult to improve adherence?

"The challenge in changing such behavior is complex, but finding ways to improve patient adherence is a win-win situation for everyone involved in healthcare," noted Dr. Rosenblatt. "There has never been a better time, nor time of greater need. Now is the time for all of us—patients, doctors, pharmacists, government, insurers, employers and the pharmaceutical industry—to work to solve this problem," said Dr. Rosenblatt.

Treat People Like People, Not Patients

HealthPrize Technologies believes it has at least part of the solution, which is to provide an innovative approach with an online and mobile-based program that is fun, engaging and educational.

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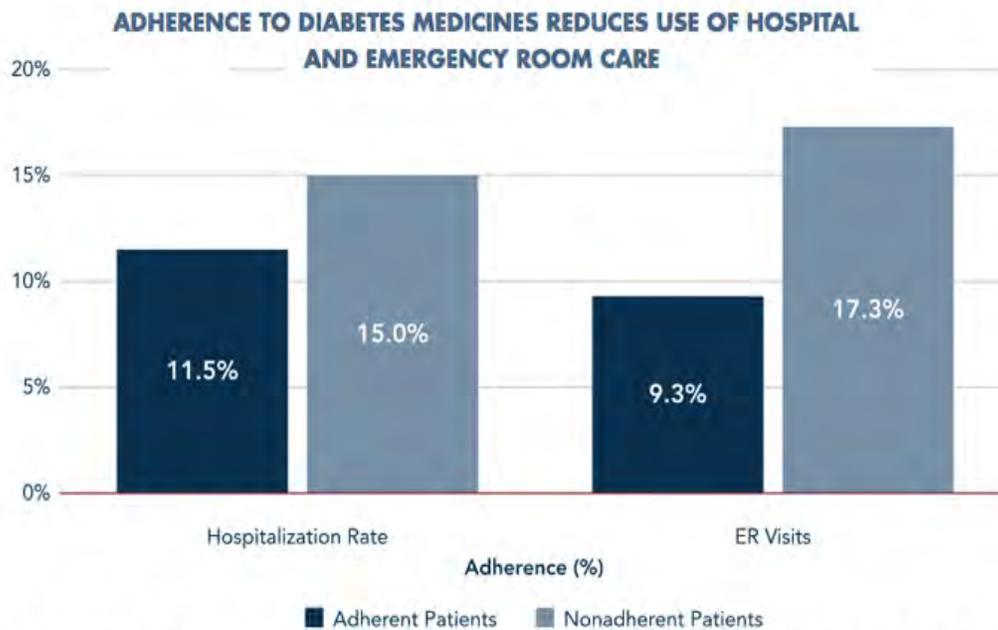


Figure 1. Adherence Reduces Use of Hospital and Emergency Room Care



Katrina Firlik

“If the goal is to motivate people to stick with an important prescription medication, you need to offer an intervention that people actually want,” said Katrina Firlik, MD, Co-Founder and Chief Medical Officer at HealthPrize.

HealthPrize performed a survey of nearly 1,000 people on at least one medication for a chronic condition and asked: “What type of program,

designed to help you stick with your prescription medication, would you be likely to sign up for?” The options were:

- (1) a rewards program,
- (2) email reminders,
- (3) text reminders,
- (4) online education,
- (5) phone call reminders, and
- (6) pharmacist-based program.

Rewards, not surprisingly, won by a large margin; 70% chose rewards (points redeemable for gift certificates or merchandise). Only 14% chose a phone call and only 6% chose a pharmacist-based option.

“Think about yourself,” said Firlik. “Do you like receiving phone calls at home? Probably not. However, if you’re like most people, you do actually pay attention to your credit card points and airline miles. These types of programs actually do influence people in the real world and make a difference for the sponsoring companies.”

The HealthPrize Model

HealthPrize is an internet and mobile based platform that uses gaming dynamics, behavioral economics and proven concepts from consumer marketing to motivate patients to start and stay on their medication.



Tom Kottler

“We offer patients rewards through a loyalty program with chances to win sweepstakes after verifying that they have refilled their prescriptions, daily self-reporting that they have taken their medication, and accessing educational materials available on the web site,” said Tom Kottler, CEO and co-founder of HealthPrize. Kottler and Firlik were interviewed on a Pharma Marketing Talk podcast (listen here: <http://bitly.com/PMT160>).

“It’s kind of like a loyalty program for your medication and meant to make the dull process of taking medication for a chronic condition fun and engaging.”

It all sounds very good in theory, but does it work in practice? To answer that question, HealthPrize partnered with RealAge—a leading health and wellness site centered around the groundbreaking RealAge Test®, a scientific but simple-to-take test that calculates how old your body thinks you are—to do a six-month asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) pilot study that tested engagement with its online and mobile platform. The results, which were announced on February 28, 2012, are summarized in this article.

Focus on Asthma/COPD

When asked why HealthPrize and RealAge focused on patients with asthma and COPD to participate in the pilot study, Firlik said “We really could have chosen any condition ... In collaboration with RealAge we simply chose asthma and COPD because that’s a strong point of theirs in terms of the educational material and it’s an area where we both wanted to increase our footing in terms of customers.”

Kottler confirmed Firlik’s point about the prevalence of non-adherence across all therapeutic categories. “We were at a major pharmaceutical company not long ago and talking to their head of the adherence team,” said Kottler, “and asked her to tell us one or two of the brands that had the biggest adherence problem. She just got this glum look on her face and said every brand has an adherence problem.”

HealthPrize is working with a large consulting firm to quantify the dollar value that is lost in revenue by pharma every year as a result of non-adherence. “There really hasn’t been any good research on this,” said Kottler, “but the numbers are definitely north of a \$100 billion a year.” When the research is complete, HealthPrize will publish the data in a white paper.

According to a 2008 study of 1,812 patients with asthma or COPD, only 13 percent of patients refilled their medication often enough to allow for continuous coverage (Haupt D, Krigsman K, Nilsson JLG. “Medication persistence among patients with asthma/COPD drugs”; *Pharm World Sci* (2008) 30:509-514.)

Given that daily maintenance inhaler use is critical to preventing exacerbations, emergency room visits, and hospitalizations, HealthPrize believes that innovative solutions are required to improve outcomes in this population.

The Study Parameters

A total of 282 adult patients, with a mean age of 53.5, participated in the HealthPrize program, which involved earning points for a number of activities:

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- self-reporting medication taking,
- completing weekly educational quizzes and surveys, and
- reading daily educational “Fortune Cookies.”

Points were then redeemed in the Rewards Mall for e-certificates and merchandise (see box). Patients also are automatically entered into a weekly “PowerPill Sweepstakes” if they are compliant with their medications at least 6 of 7 days in the prior week and if HealthPrize has all of their data for that week. If patients are compliant all 7 days, and they win, then it's double the winnings!

High Engagement Among Asthma/COPD Patients

The pilot revealed higher than expected engagement rates, with an average of 7.7 logins per patient per week, and an average 75.7 percent daily medication self-reporting rate. If only “active” participants are counted, the self-reporting rate was 89.6 percent. Further, 92 percent of participants reported that that they would continue with the program for greater than six months if they were able.

Patients used several different channels to login and self-report: e-mail, Web dashboard, texting, and a mobile app, which was introduced in the 5th month of the program.

Additional results and participant feedback includes:

- 69 percent demonstrated a daily self-reporting rate between 81 to 100 percent
- 62 percent ranked their likelihood of recommending the program to others as a 10 (“very likely”) based on a scale of 1-10; 13 percent responded with a 9, and 15 percent with an 8.
- 63 percent of all participants felt they had learned “a lot” from the medication education component offered in the HealthPrize program
- Praise for HealthPrize’s financial and gift reward component was high: “It’s been extremely nice to get an actual award. Especially for low-income patients such as me, this is a great method to achieve compliance.”

- Feedback regarding HealthPrize education was also very positive: “...The quiz portion was my favorite. I have always believed that knowledge is power, and in this case, knowledge is also life.”

“We had a woman who emailed us the day before major surgery and was wondering how she could remain perfect in her points for the competition even though she was going to be in the hospital for a couple of days,” said Kottler.

The following participant feedback really hit the nail on the head in terms of what HealthPrize is trying to

achieve: “This program really helped me stay on track and made me feel good about taking my meds. Having a chronic condition isn’t fun and is sometimes depressing, and this program gave me something to look forward to and made me feel a part of a group and less isolated.”

Commenting on this feedback, Firlirk stated: “It was rewarding to see how our system really became a part of so many people’s lives and had such an impact. This bodes well for our ability to improve medication adherence and to add that critical ‘fun factor’ that other programs lack.”

Lessons learned

Based on user feedback, some people became quite emotionally engaged with the program, more so than HealthPrize had expected. The company aims to find ways to nurture this further, and continue to “humanize” the program to appeal to the person rather than “the patient”.

More people than expected achieved perfect scores. In other words, they engaged with every possible activity and earned every point. In fact, a number of people requested a greater array of activities. HealthPrize will take this into account when planning upgrades to the system, and will offer these “super-users” more to do.

Surprisingly, engaging with the educational quizzes ranked as the #2 favorite activity, second only to the

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The HealthPrize Point System

Basically, the more compliant patients are with their medications, the more points they earn. But there's a twist. HealthPrize awards a variable number of points each day, so it's not as boring as: one compliant day = 10 points. Some days are real jackpot days, when patients are awarded more points than usual. There's a benefit to perfection!

HealthPrize also awards points for the weekly Get Smart quiz, the weekly Take a Survey option, the daily Fortune Cookie, for timely refilling of medications, and for the initial sign-up with the HealthPrize system.

Once patients have stockpiled a good number of points, they can redeem them at the HealthPrize mall.

general earning of points. Who knew that taking quizzes could be so fun! HealthPrize will continue to enhance the educational experience.

HealthPrize has several other pilot programs rolling out in 2012 that target a diverse array of conditions, from acne to oncology. These programs will aim not only to engage patients, but also to specifically reward patients for timely refills, and to verify compliance via HealthPrize's patent-pending automated refill verification system.

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