
Compassionate Care: The Need for Streamlining Program Management with Technology

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Abstract

Compassionate Care programs are an important part of brand and corporate strategies, and their popularity with patients continues to grow. However, they come with unique challenges both administratively and financially, and they're only getting more complex. To keep pace, it's time to use technology to optimize one of the last truly manual processes in life science marketing.

Introduction

If you work in the life science industry, you know that Compassionate Care programs are an integral part of your overall patient support strategy. Providing medicine on compassionate grounds can be a literal lifesaving opportunity for many patients who do not have the means to buy the medication they need, and is also an important component of most brand and corporate mission statements.

The standard process used by most companies to fulfill Compassionate Care requests can be slow and inefficient. More often than not these programs rely on manual solutions that result in longer wait times for patients, multiple data entry points for manufacturers and little oversight and predictability for budgeting. However, the biggest risk of these manual processes is the sub-optimal storage of Personal Health Information (PHI) on

non-secure emails, unlocked spreadsheets, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms that are not compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and in Canada, the Personal Health Information and Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA).

In consideration of the above, it's clear that Compassionate Care could benefit by moving away from manual processes, and capitalize on technology's ability to streamline processes, control spiralling costs, and secure PHI. In addition, technology can generate a tremendous amount of analytical data on Compassionate Care requests, helping manufacturers properly plan future offerings, while avoiding the many pitfalls inherent in providing free product to all requesters.

The requirement for Compassionate Care programs will continue to grow

The need for Compassionate Care within the spectrum of patient support is steadily increasing. In addition, the rising costs of prescription drugs coupled with an aging population (Figure 1) is generating an unprecedented demand.

According to the journal *Biotechnology Healthcare*,

spending for specialty drugs is increasing at about 20 percent per year (much higher than for any other healthcare benefit), and as the population continues to age, this trend is expected to accelerate. Although not necessarily causal, these statistics make it easy to infer that the need for Compassionate Care drug support isn't likely to be diminishing any time soon.

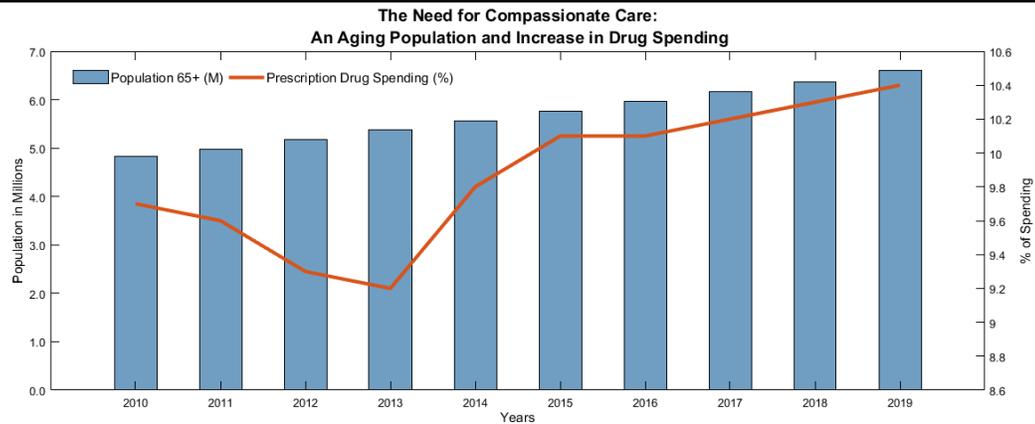


Fig. 1

1. Data for Population 65+ are projections from 2016 onward. Statistics Canada. (2012). An Aging Population (11-402-X).
2. Data for Prescription drug spending are projections from 2015 onwards. Kamal, R., & Cox, C. (2017). What are the recent and forecasted trends in prescription drug spending?

Manual Compassionate Care programs are inefficient and costly to manage

Although popular, these programs come at a significant cost, both financially and administratively. Currently, most Compassionate Care orders are faxed or phoned into head office and then manually input by a customer support team. There may be multiple points of manual data entry, greatly increasing the chance of errors and duplicate orders, especially when using a standard spreadsheet program.

There is also a risk of duplicate requests for the same patient, and some patients receiving more prescription renewals than a program was intended to allow. These can create unpredictable costs, and if left uncontrolled, potentially substantial budget overruns.

Sometimes a generic customer database or CRM program is used, but these don't meet HIPAA or PHIPA regulations, as most state quite clearly in their User Agreements, and they are generally not configured for Compassionate Care program management.

Finally, orders are either placed by head office staff using Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, or simply emailed to the company's distribution center.

It's easy to see that the standard process used by most companies to fulfill Compassionate Care requests is slow, painful and provides little in the way of oversight or analytics.

Inefficient Compassionate Care programs run the risk of PHI breaches

All of the above inefficiencies obviously add to cost, but more importantly also come with the major risk of PHI breaches inherent in the sending and receiving of patient data by unencrypted emails and unsecured faxes; the sharing of patient data by multiple administrative team members using spreadsheets; and the risk of breach in non-HIPAA-compliant databases and CRM software. If HIPAA

or PHIPA regulations are contravened through these program inefficiencies, serious consequences may result. These include mandatory disclosure of the breach; the costs of advising patients of, and mitigating the breach; as well as the potential issues related to privacy-breach damage, class action lawsuits, and a public relations backlash.

Technological management can reduce spiraling costs, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure that PHI is fully secured

Although manual processes get the job done, they result in less oversight and control over Compassionate Care orders, increasing both the risk of duplicate and non-qualified orders, as well

decreasing the level of protection for PHI. Without purpose-built technology, programs rapidly become inefficient, non-compliance creeps in, and the ability to track, forecast and budget is greatly reduced.

The obvious solution to mitigating the risk of this manual process is to replace it with a robust technology solution. Instead of an over-the-counter CRM, however, this solution should take into account the specific requirements of the life science

industry, including the need to ensure dispensing physicians are licensed in the state or province they are dispensing in; that PHI is fully protected; that duplicate orders are eliminated, etc.

Technology can generate good analytical information, which helps you see the big picture

The right technology, in the form of purpose-built software, can also generate a tremendous amount of good analytical data on Compassionate Care requests, helping manufacturers properly plan future offerings, while avoiding the many pitfalls associated with providing free product to all requesters. This includes analytics to track Compassionate Care requests on a national and regional basis, helping to identify areas of overuse, underuse, or misuse of the program. Allowing program administrators to tweak their programs to ensure that they continue to provide maximum benefit to the program participants.

Some of the benefits behind a well-designed technology solution include:

- Ensuring the dispensing practitioner credentials are up to date. Is the HCP currently licensed and in good standing in the state or province in which they practice? How is this information monitored and tracked?
- Confirming that physicians who have requested compassionate products submit all required information for registration into the program. Without controls at the point of registration, missing information will lead to follow ups becoming very difficult.
- Identifying trends where the compassionate program is being overused or misused and providing automated controls to avoid this potential liability.
- Being able to notify practitioners and patients about a recalled product is difficult, time consuming and close to impossible without proper record keeping.
- Determining ongoing budgets and anticipating current and future demand. When programs are administered manually budgeting becomes a guessing game.

Technology can increase health professional compliance by providing an easy-to-use self-serve approach

Health care professionals are willing to use technology when it makes their lives easier. They are responsive to a software program that is user-friendly and enjoyable to use. With the right technological solution, practitioners and administrative staff will be on board with the new requirements, quickly delivering for their patients most in need and providing a simple and easy user experience.

A comprehensive, multi-directional CRM is both practical and provides much needed efficiencies. Having a platform that meets the needs of the company delivering the support program as well as those of the HCPs using the self-serve portal, ensures both high adoption for the technology and greatly simplifies existing workflows.

A solution to the Compassionate Care dilemma is now available

Health Loyalty® is the life science industry's only fully SDLC Validated, HIPAA and PHIPA compliant marketing cloud. It is also the only marketing cloud designed to fully manage Compassionate Care, co-pay, and reimbursement

programs, providing full financial control and transactional security. For more information on Health Loyalty, please contact PharmaCommunications.

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