

Spotlight on Texas

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), in partnership with the University of Texas Austin College of Pharmacy, University of Texas Tyler College of Pharmacy, a Texas-based community pharmacy chain, and an independent pharmacy, sought to increase medication therapy management (MTM) coverage and utilization by establishing MTM protocols for community pharmacists.

DSHS identified a population of interest in metropolitan Austin (high socioeconomic status, elevated burden, increased healthcare access, and privately insured) and northeast Texas (varying socioeconomic status, extremely high burden of chronic disease, numerous comorbidities, under- and uninsured, semi-rural and privately insured).

Within this target population, adults with medication adherence < 80% were identified for the intervention. Initial plans to offer in-person, pharmacist-led education sessions on medication adherence were adapted in response to COVID-19 restrictions to a phone-based intervention.

Data from Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) generated a list of member patients who appeared to be:

- non-adherent,
- had preferred formulary alternatives, and
- had identified therapy gaps or were taking high-risk medication(s).

Students from the University of Texas (UT) at Tyler College of Pharmacy along with the Tarrytown Independent Pharmacy team utilized motivational interviewing to identify barriers and recommend solutions for adherence, including an option to enroll in medication synchronization. Students also provided recommendations regarding cost benefit for preferred formulary alternatives, therapy gaps and high-risk medications to prescribers.

Of the 450 eligible patients identified, 441 were contacted by phone and received the intervention. Data from the Learning Collaborative was utilized to develop a foundation for engaging with physicians, clinics, payers, and community pharmacies and to inform the development of an MTM/Medication Adherence Brief. Sustainable partnerships with Texas State Board of Pharmacy, Texas Community Pharmacist Enhanced Services Network (CPESN), Texas Pharmacy Association, and Texas Medical Association were developed as a result of this initiative. Engagement is ongoing with BCBS, United Healthcare, and other private payers to cover MTM services.