

HealthPartners: A unique approach to managing medications

Who we are

HealthPartners is a Minnesota-based, integrated organization providing medical, dental and pharmacy care and coverage, well-being solutions, research, education and customer service for more than 50 years. As the largest consumer-governed, nonprofit health care organization in the nation, we serve more than 1.5 million medical and dental members nationwide, as well as more than 1 million patients in our hospitals and clinics.

Medications: Increasing value, improving lives

The challenge

Given the increasing cost and complexity of prescription drugs, patients need maximum value from their medicine. To improve health and save lives, medicines need to be effective, safe and taken correctly. However, studies show that:

- Half of all patients do not take their medications as prescribed¹
- More than 1 in 5 new prescriptions go unfilled²

These problems can result in serious medical complications and unnecessary health care costs – especially for the elderly and vulnerable among us:

- \$290 billion wasted health care dollars each year
- More than 125,000 Americans die annually from not taking drugs as prescribed
- 17 percent increase in emergency room visits

The solution

As an integrated system of care and coverage, HealthPartners has the unique ability to view care, from perspectives of both the payer and provider. By focusing on optimizing medicine use, we're also able to look at lowering total cost of care.

Our approach, Medication Therapy Management (MTM) helps connect patients with specially-trained clinical pharmacists to help them get the most from their medicine. MTM identifies gaps in care to achieve optimal health outcomes and reduce costs by making sure that patients:

- are prescribed the correct medicine
- can afford the medicine they're taking
- take their medicine correctly
- are getting the right results and that the medicine is working

Why it works

HealthPartners uses a team-based care approach to determine the best care for our members and patients. Doctors and pharmacists work alongside one another to focus on care needs. While the doctors diagnose a condition, the MTM pharmacist is the expert when it comes to medicine. Often consumers are confused by their medicine and need a partner to walk through the complexities of side effects, interactions, specific directions and costs. While there might not be time to understand these details during an office visit, a pharmacist can work with patients to get a deep understanding of their medicine. Pharmacists are viewed to be one of the most trusted care professionals and combined with their expertise in medicine, they can support patients in maximizing the value of their medicine.

1. Osterberg L, Blaschke T. "Adherence to Medication." *New Engl. J. Med.*, Aug 4, 2005

2. Goldman D. "Pharmacy Benefits and the Use of Drugs by the Chronically Ill." *J. of the Amer. Med. Ass'n*, May 19, 2004

Annie's story: A case in point

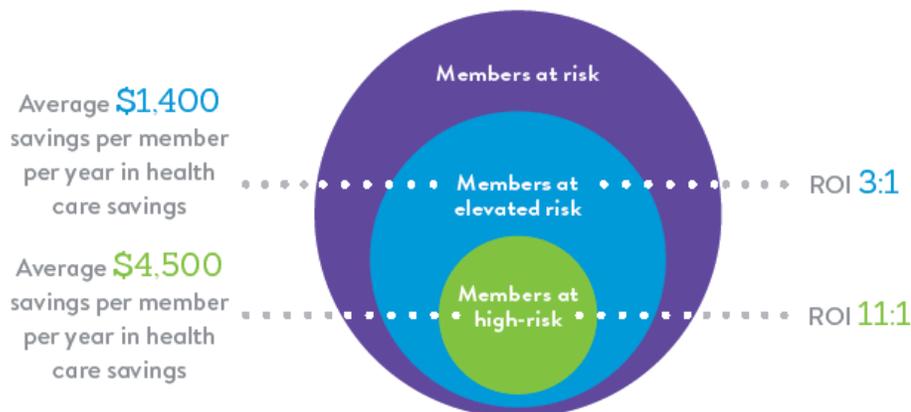
Annie* was in her mid-70s when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She also has chronic kidney disease, congestive heart failure (CHF) and diabetes. Over a two-year period, she had been hospitalized five times.

To address these barriers to care, Annie's primary care physician referred her to a clinical pharmacist in HealthPartners Medication Therapy Management (MTM) program. The pharmacist helped her with steps such as:

- Changing injections to safer oral diabetes medications
- Creating a plan for Annie to weigh herself daily and take extra diuretic medication if she notices weight gain to reduce swelling and make breathing easier
- Teaching Annie's brother how to help set up her medication box
- Helping Annie understand why she needed an antibiotic that she had stopped taking for a chronic hip infection

Thanks to this support, Annie is able to live safely and independently. In the four months since she started working with a pharmacist, she hasn't been to the emergency room or hospital.

Proven results



Diabetes care results



67% of MTM participants achieved optimal diabetes care



37% of control group participants achieved optimal diabetes care

Blood pressure results



72% of MTM participants achieved controlled blood pressure



40% of control group participants achieved controlled blood pressure

*Not her real name