



Engaging Patients and Improving Clinical Outcomes Through Integrated, Patient-Centered Pharmacy Care: Catalyst Health Rx

Value-based Care Activity

- 30,000 Medicare Advantage and 325,000 commercial covered lives in the Catalyst Health Network as of January 2022
- Four Medicare Advantage contracts and 11 commercial contracts with a mix of downside and upside risk, as well as some prospective payment
- Catalyst Health Network launched as a commercial ACO in 2015

Accountable Care Atlas Competency: Design care teams

BACKGROUND

In 2015, Catalyst identified the fracturing and fragmenting of the traditional health care experience as an opportunity for improvement, both for patients and providers. It can be all too easy for patients to miss out on critical information or recommendations as they move between settings and providers of care, especially those patients with multiple chronic or complex conditions. “Managing the pill bottles” is often a source of frustration and a knowledge gap for many primary care providers. Catalyst changes that trajectory by integrating pharmacy services as an extension of primary care in a way that improves outcomes and the care experience for patients – regularly without any additional out of pocket costs – and alleviates the clinical coordination burden from providers.

As with many models of integrated pharmacy services, the Catalyst Health Rx model streamlines and synchronizes refills, pre-sorts and -packages medication for customer convenience, and offers safe medication delivery – all of which contribute to improved adherence and reduced costs. More importantly, the model replaces a transactional system of care with one that is strongly relational.

APPROACH

Similar to models of integrated behavioral health care, pharmacists are solidly integrated into the Catalyst primary care team. During regular appointments, primary care providers identify patients who would benefit from Catalyst’s integrated pharmacy services, often patients with chronic or complex conditions or health-related social needs that demand more intense medication management and support. Clinicians provide a warm, virtual handoff to a pharmacist so that patients can immediately feel connected to the individual who will help them manage this aspect of their care. As patients are typically empaneled with a pharmacist (as they are empaneled with a primary care provider), this sets the stage for an ongoing relationship between the patient and pharmacist, with regular and as-needed communications facilitated by a digital platform.

Each patient receives an initial intake appointment (which can be as short as 15 minutes or as long as three hours, according to patient complexity and need), where extensive conversation and mutual learning occur to help optimize the impact of medication therapies. The Catalyst Health Rx pharmacist works to fully understand a patient’s understanding and feelings about the prescribed medications (i.e., conducts a “medication belief assessment”) and provides coaching on how to take medications properly, always respecting the primacy of the patient. Thereafter, pharmacy staff regularly outreach to patients to check in on progress and evolving health needs. These personal contacts, together

ABOUT CATALYST HEALTH RX

Catalyst Health Rx is part of [Catalyst Health Group](#), an organization that is built-for-purpose to champion primary care access, innovation and investment. Catalyst Health Group also operates Catalyst Health Network, Texas’ largest clinically integrated network for primary care providers. Together, the group supports more than 1.5 million patients and is the [only](#) health care organization in the nation to have achieved [URAC](#) accreditation in Clinical Integration, Transitions of Care, Case Management 6.0, and Drug Therapy Management.

KEY LEARNINGS

- Traditional prescribing patterns often create multiple points of potential failure, from the time prescriptions are handed to patients or electronically sent to the pharmacy, to the time when/if patients arrive at the pharmacy, and finally when patients must manage their own medication regimens. Integrated pharmacy care management uses medication as a tool of engagement with patients and anticipates and averts challenges related to communication, cost, and comprehension. The results are optimized medication therapies and higher-quality health outcomes.
- An effective relationship between pharmacist and patient is founded on trust and communication, facilitated by timely linkage from the primary care provider and empanelment. It is not built around a remote, transactional model of dispensing medications and only conveying information about warnings and side effects.
- Collaborative, two-way relationships between pharmacists and primary care providers expand the team-based approach to patient care and care management necessary to support patients in every step of their care journeys.

with availability through the digital platform, nurture a partnership to promote patient well-being. Acknowledging that 90-day refills are not the ideal tool for helping patients manage their chronic conditions, regular pharmacy team/patient check-ins become a tool of engagement, improving adherence and reducing the likelihood of stockpiles or missed doses due to infrequent or insufficient communication.

In addition to their clinical competencies, Catalyst Health Rx pharmacists are trained in techniques such as Motivational Interviewing, active listening, and shared decision making. The resulting approach is very patient-centered and customized, with medications clinically optimized for each patient's unique needs. Services include medication monitoring (supported by analytics-driven gap identification), management (powered by Catalyst's distinctive relational model), and dispensing (ensuring alignment with physician orders).

The benefits of the Catalyst model accrue to patients, providers, and pharmacists, and also to payers who see improved care experiences and reduced costs for patients when care is optimized, defragmented, and based on effective relationships. Primary care providers benefit from knowing their patients' pharmacy needs are being addressed in a team-based, relational model, and they also can rely on [data-driven insights](#) and reporting that can help them stay abreast of changing patient needs, even in between visits.

RESULTS TO DATE

Using Catalyst monitors a number of key performance indicators, including (but not limited to) measures related to referral, engagement, adherence, clinical outcomes, patient-reported quality of life, health care utilization, and total cost of care. They also collect patient success stories to inspire and humanize their work.

Catalyst has achieved adherence in 93 percent of patients, as defined by the metric of proportion of days covered. Further, Catalyst has achieved a 5-Star rating for all CMS-related measures for medication adherence.

In terms of outcomes, Catalyst reports:

- Average of 25 percent reduction in HbA1c for patients with uncontrolled diabetes
- \$278 PMPM reduction in total cost of care for patients with multiple comorbidities
- 21 percent reduction in Emergency Department visits
- 41 percent reduction in hospital readmissions

Source: Catalyst Health Network, propriety information

TOOLS AND VENDOR PARTNERS

Catalyst uses a proprietary digital pharmacy care management platform and workflow system, Catalyst Cloud, to connect pharmacy care teams with patients in a functional ecosystem. This platform ensures these connections are seamless and integrated to drive effective communication and medication management. Through this system, patients receive on-demand access to medication-related information and guidance, improving confidence, adherence, and ultimately, outcomes.

Catalyst Health Rx pharmacists are also able to access the various electronic health records used within their clinically integrated network in order to ascertain patient-specific information and streamline common reporting processes between themselves and primary care providers.

CHALLENGES WITH IMPLEMENTATION

When this care delivery model was first created, there was no economic model to support it. Shrinking pharmacy margins coupled with network requirements and the compression of pharmacy services from pharmacy benefit managers can create challenges, but also the opportunity for innovation. Blending the pharmacy care management model with other value-based care and population health strategies ultimately resulted in a model that is resilient and sustainable for Catalyst.

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