The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA®) represents the interests of America’s community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 23,000 independent community pharmacies. Together they represent an $88.5 billion health care marketplace, dispense nearly 40% of all retail prescriptions, and employ more than 300,000 individuals, including over 62,000 pharmacists. Independent community pharmacists are readily accessible medication experts who can help lower health care spending. To learn more, go to www.ncpanet.org.
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For more information about the PAMA initiative, contact adherence@ncpanet.org.

The PAMA initiative was developed by NCPA and is supported by unrestricted funding from:
PAMA: Year Two
Connecting with Patients, Measuring Results

It's a well-known fact that a major driver of rising health care costs in America is the cost associated with treating chronic illnesses. For the more than half of all Americans who suffer from at least one chronic disease, medications are a routine and effective course of treatment. And yet, evidence confirms that many of these patients are not taking their medications as prescribed, leading to substantial worsening of their disease and creating a major drain on the nation’s economy.

Pharmacists represent a valuable resource in helping patients take their medications. Because of their accessibility and medication expertise, pharmacists are well-positioned to help tackle this nation’s non-adherence problem. In fact, patient connectedness with their pharmacist was identified as the leading predictor of adherence in new research that NCPA released earlier this year. Working closely with patients, caregivers, and the entire health care team, pharmacists also can play a vital role in some of the emerging models of care, including accountable care organizations and patient-centered medical homes.

Not only that, but in an era of decreasing reimbursement, adherence programs represent a foundation for additional patient care services. Adherence services make sense because they are already part of the dispensing function, yet they provide a first step on the path forward toward pharmacist-provided patient care services that health plans and patients are slowly beginning to expect.

NCPA is continuing its commitment to adherence through its Pharmacists Advancing Medication Adherence (PAMA) initiative by working in collaboration with organizations and stakeholders committed to advancing and enhancing patient medication adherence.

**PAMA Vision:** By 2015, actions taken by community pharmacists will result in improvement in medication adherence rates.

**PAMA Goal:** Influence community pharmacists to recognize and provide adherence services as a core component of the profession making it as equally important as dispensing and counseling.

As we wrap up our second year of PAMA, we continue to look for ways to build on the program’s successes and find new ways to connect pharmacies with patients and measure the results. These efforts are highlighted in the following pages and help to showcase the four areas of PAMA focus:

- Patient Care
- Public Policy
- Pharmacy Operations
- Pharmacy Education

We’d like to thank our current PAMA sponsors, Cardinal Health Foundation, Merck, and Pfizer, for their support, and we welcome you to join our effort to advance medication adherence as a path to better patient health.

B. Douglas Hoey, RPh, MBA
Chief Executive Officer
Patient Care

Connecting through Medication Synchronization

As Former Surgeon General Dr. Koop famously proclaimed, “Drugs don’t work for people who don’t take them.” At its core, PAMA provides pharmacists with tools and programs to help patients take their medications as prescribed.

In 2011, NCPA developed Simplify My Meds™, a turnkey program to help pharmacists boost medication adherence and improve pharmacy operations. Based on the concept of medication synchronization, Simplify My Meds helps pharmacists consolidate and coordinate all of a patient’s chronic medications to be filled on the same date each month. This coordination of refills decreases regimen complexity, which has been shown to boost adherence, and provides the pharmacy with an opportunity to review the patient’s entire profile once a month to ensure safe and appropriate use. It also promotes the idea of a “pharmacy home” and a more coordinated level of care.

Medication synchronization also provides an important foundation on which pharmacies can provide additional patient care services, such as immunizations, medication therapy management, and diabetes education. Adherence packaging—everything from pill organizers to blister cards to multidose strip packaging solutions—can help patients understand how and when to take their medications correctly, and it can create additional revenue opportunities for the pharmacy.

The Simplify My Meds program continues to gain adoption among independent pharmacies. Currently, almost 1,000 independent community pharmacies have implemented the Simplify My Meds program. Additionally, preliminary data from the 2013 NCPA Digest, sponsored by Cardinal Health, suggests that almost 40% of independent community pharmacies are offering medication synchronization services.
Medication synchronization provides an important foundation on which pharmacies can provide additional patient care services, such as immunizations, medication therapy management, and diabetes education.

Recent results from Thrifty White Pharmacy’s successful medication synchronization program demonstrated an improvement in adherence to chronic disease therapies by 18 to 26 percent and an additional 84 extra days of therapy a year. With an eye toward achieving similar metrics and results, NCPA sought to measure and validate the effectiveness of Simplify My Meds and its ability to improve adherence rates. Early in 2013, NCPA commissioned a six-month prospective randomized study to measure the impact of Simplify My Meds on patient adherence rates. NCPA recruited 13 pharmacies from across the United States to participate and, with help from technology partner Raleigh-based Ateb, kicked off the data collection period of the study in March with final results expected this fall. So far, the data look very positive, and NCPA is currently designing two additional studies that will kick off later this year.
Public Policy

Advancing the Role of Pharmacists as Medication Experts

Adherence and proper medication use are important elements of today’s emphasis on outcomes-driven health care. Pharmacists are well-positioned to assist in these areas. As part of PAMA’s focus on influencing public policy, NCPA continued to expand our partnerships with stakeholders and work closely with federal and state agencies and lawmakers to advocate the value of pharmacists in improving the quality of patient care and outcomes and reducing health care expenditures.

NCPA announced the research findings in a special briefing with more than 115 members of the media, health care organizations, and other interested parties in attendance. Additionally, NCPA is continuing to work with stakeholders to share these findings with others in the health care arena to bring attention to the importance of medication adherence and how community pharmacists are an essential resource to help keep Americans healthy. The report card and campaign materials are available at www.ncpanet.org/reportcard.

Adherence Message Reaches Capitol Hill

NCPA has worked diligently to educate members of Congress and their staffs about how their constituents and the health care system as a whole can benefit from appropriate medication use and meaningful interactions with a community pharmacist. The bipartisan Community Pharmacy Caucus held two Congressional briefings this year to discuss the importance of medication adherence and the bottom-line benefit it can have in reducing overall health care costs. During both events, which NCPA helped to coordinate, community pharmacists were front and center to educate Congressional staffers about the expanding role of pharmacists in health care as a means of improving outcomes and lowering costs.

At the fall briefing, NCPA member Tim Weippert, RPh, Thrifty White Pharmacy’s executive vice president of pharmacy, was on
CPT, briefed staffers on how medication therapy management services provided by pharmacists encourage preventive care among Medicare Part D beneficiaries and improve medication adherence. The end result is improved health for the patient and long-term savings for both the patient and health care system.

CBO Confirms Link between Drug Spend and Medical Savings

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) controls the financial purse strings behind many of this nation’s health care policy decisions. For the first time, the nonpartisan independent research body released a groundbreaking analysis in November 2012 that showed a relationship between changes in prescription drug use and changes in the use of and spending for medical services. In its report, the CBO concluded that a 1% increase in the number of prescriptions for Medicare beneficiaries would cause Medicare spending on medical services to fall by one-fifth of 1%. Although this comes as no surprise to many in pharmacy, this change in thinking likely will have a positive impact on health care policy going forward.

NCPA staff and its members look forward to working with the CBO, policymakers, and health plans to increase awareness of the cost-saving role of community pharmacists and to encourage patients to take full advantage of the adherence services provided by their local pharmacist.

“Touted the success of Thrifty White’s synchronized refill program. He shared that many independent community pharmacies are implementing new programs, such as Simplify My Meds™, to help patients adhere to their prescribed medication regimen. Weippert also noted that the coordination of refills benefits all parties involved, from the patient, to the pharmacist, and even the payer. By reviewing all of a patient’s medications at one time each month, pharmacists get a more complete look at their regimen and can help avoid costlier problems such as hospital readmissions.

At the kickoff event for 113th Congressional Community Pharmacy Caucus, which is co-chaired by Reps. Austin Scott (R–Ga.) and Peter Welch (D–Vt.), Atlanta-area independent community pharmacist Jonathan Marquess, PharmD, CDE,
Medication Synchronization Gains Broader Recognition, Acceptance

Independent pharmacists have always been pioneers in patient care, and the provision of medication synchronization services is no exception. Now, many outside of pharmacy are beginning to recognize the patient benefits from medication synchronization, including:

- **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):** The largest payer for health care in the nation is preparing to move forward with the implementation of prorated daily cost-sharing for the Medicare Part D program. NCPA provided input last year when CMS was contemplating the allowance of short fills for purposes of medication synchronization, and the agency recognized and addressed the benefits of such coordination as part of its requirements for the 2014 Medicare Part D program. Beginning January 1, 2014, Part D sponsors must calculate and apply a daily cost-sharing rate to certain prescriptions that are dispensed for less than a 30-day supply. This should help facilitate an even greater uptake of medication synchronization programs by Medicare beneficiaries.

- **National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP):** As the standards development organization, NCPDP serves as the communications hub, bringing together pharmacists, technology vendors, and payers to prepare a telecommunication pathway on short fills associated with medication synchronization. Through the work group process, NCPDP approved two new submission clarification codes, which will be ready for utilization to coincide with the start of the prorated daily cost-sharing requirement in 2014. In the event a pharmacy receives a refill-too-soon rejection message, it will be able to submit a clarification code to the payer for an override for the initial short fill, and the first follow-up fill:
  - **Shortened Days Supply Fill** – used to request an override to plan limitations when a shortened days supply is being dispensed.
  - **Fill Subsequent to a Shortened Days Supply Fill** – used to request an override to plan limitations when a fill subsequent to a shortened days supply is being dispensed.

- **NEHI (previously known as the New England Healthcare Institute):** A well-respected health policy research institute focused on enabling innovation in health care, NEHI has been consulting with NCPA on innovative ways pharmacists are deploying adherence programs in their communities. In a report released by NEHI in January 2013, *Improving Patient Medication Adherence: Key Issues and Challenges in the Daily Practice of Medicine*, refill synchronization was cited as an important mechanism to facilitate greater adherence. “Evidence suggests that synchronizing prescription refills and reducing the number of visits a patient must make to the pharmacy can improve adherence. Refill synchronization could be a goal for care coordination and collaboration among prescribing physicians and dispensing pharmacies.”

- **American Medical Association (AMA):** As pharmacists have found, prescribers benefit and are enthusiastic about medication synchronization for their patients, so much so that the AMA’s House of Delegates adopted a policy in November 2012 to “encourage relevant organizations, including but not limited to insurance companies and professional pharmacy organizations, to develop a plan to implement prescription refill schedule strategies so that patients requiring multiple prescription medications may reduce the travel barriers for prescription acquisition.” We look forward to working together with the AMA to carry out this policy.
Adherence is one of the few win-win-wins in health care. The patient can achieve better health, the payer can save on medical costs, and the pharmacy can see higher revenues. Not only that, adherence programs represent a building block for pharmacies to diversify patient care services, which is key in today’s challenging reimbursement environment. NCPA has continued to develop innovative tools and programs to help pharmacists draw upon their clinical expertise and translate those skills to excellent patient care, all while focusing on the need to remain profitable.

Two Calculators Help Pharmacists ‘Do the Math’

In 2010, NCPA created a simple calculator to help pharmacists understand the financial impact of implementing an adherence program. The Adherence Impact Calculator, www.ncpanet.org/adherencecalculator, shows that working with two new patients each day to achieve perfect adherence can help the pharmacy realize an increase of over $61,000 in gross profit in one year. To date, the calculator has had more than 3,300 visitors and 7,000 page views.

NCPA released a new calculator in April 2013 that helps pharmacists calculate the financial value of implementing a medication synchronization program. Based on the results of NCPA member Thrifty White Pharmacy’s medication synchronization program, the Medication Synchronization Revenue Calculator, available at www.ncpanet.org/smm, shows the potential revenue increase a pharmacy can see by implementing a medication synchronization program. In the example shown, a pharmacy that enrolls 100 patients in a medication synchronization program can potentially see an additional $79,000/year in revenue.

Breaking Down Technology Barriers

In 2011, NCPA conducted a focus group to identify the barriers to pharmacist-provided adherence services. At the time, technology was identified as one of the biggest challenges. NCPA took on the technology challenge this year by developing a one-page Medication Synchronization Technology Capabilities Checklist that identifies some of the operational elements of a medication synchronization program (e.g., Simplify My Meds™) and how those elements can be supported by technology. The document has been shared with software vendors, including members of NCPA’s Technology Advisory Council and NCPA’s Technology/Communications Committee, and was featured in a special adherence/technology article in the June issue of America’s Pharmacist™ magazine.
Pharmacy Publications Promote Best Practices, Benefits of Synchronization

For a second year, NCPA dedicated the entire June issue of *America’s Pharmacist™* to adherence. The 60-page special issue was jam-packed with success stories and profiles of pharmacies that are providing adherence services and boosting their bottom line.

Articles included a special Q&A with Thrifty White Pharmacy’s Tim Weippert, who discussed the chain’s highly successful medication synchronization program, a profile story about Mississippi pharmacy owner Bob Lomenick’s medication synchronization program at Tyson Drugs (Holly Springs, Miss.), an in-depth article highlighting how pharmacists are using their dispensing software to boost adherence, and a special product review article that featured several adherence packaging solutions and reimbursement opportunities.

Additionally, NCPA’s Simplify My Meds™ program received prominent exposure this year in several pharmacy publications, including cover stories in both *ComputerTalk for the Pharmacist* (readership: 32,000) and *Drugstore Canada* (readership: 27,855).

Adherence Institute Delivers Adherence Know-How

Pharmacists were able to sharpen their adherence skills in an intensive half-day forum at NCPA’s 114th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in San Diego. The NCPA Adherence Institute, sponsored by Merck, was attended by more than 275 NCPA members and included special continuing education programming and vendor showcases to help pharmacists rethink how and why they are providing adherence services.

Participants learned how to leverage adherence services to form relationships with local providers and how to use adherence as a springboard for new revenue opportunities. Those in attendance also were able to experience and test-drive some of the new products and technology solutions that are making it easier, more efficient, and more profitable to implement adherence services during the Adherence Showcase.

The sessions included:

- Leveraging Adherence Technology
- Adherence: The Numbers Are in Your Favor
- Complementary Adherence Services
- Marketing/Prescriber Outreach
- Motivational Interviewing/Patient Empowerment/Behavior Change
- Staffing/Workflow
- Taking Adherence Services to the Next Level

The NCPA Adherence Institute allowed convention attendees to discover ways to make it easier, more efficient, and more profitable to implement adherence services in their pharmacy.
Looking ahead to NCPA’s 115th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in Orlando, Fla., NCPA plans to continue the NCPA Adherence Institute by offering a special track of adherence-related programming that will help put participants on the right path to improving patient adherence, driving better outcomes, and improving the pharmacy’s bottom line. The continuing education topics will include technology, marketing, complementary niche services, innovative payment models, and quality improvement initiatives.

Continuing Education Symposium Provides Peer Learning

Nearly 300 convention attendees also learned how to build on their current adherence programs during a special adherence-themed luncheon symposium. In Taking What Patients Need and Making it What They Want: Adherence Solutions for Pharmacy, participants learned how to identify the best patients to enroll in an adherence program, choose which adherence solution offers the best fit for a patient, and identify ways to modify workflow in order to provide new adherence services. The 1.5-hour symposium was recorded and converted to an Internet-based presentation for NCPA’s continuing education platform and is available at www.pharmacistelink.com.

Lunch & Learns Provide Year-Round Training

In 2012, the Simplify My Meds program launched a series of adherence-themed webinars. These programs provide practicing pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and other pharmacy staff with tips related to medication synchronization operations, as well as new tools and techniques to counsel patients on adherence. Each webinar was recorded and made available on the NCPA website for future viewing by program participants.

The topics included:

- Rethink. Adherence: Making Adherence a Priority in Your Pharmacy Practice
- Improving Patient Adherence Through Health Behavior Change
- Facilitating Behavior Change by Helping Your Patients with Goal Setting
- How to Talk [Adherence] So Your Patients Will Listen
- Medication Adherence: Working Together to Achieve Better Treatment Outcomes

Here’s what a few of our attendees had to say about the adherence programming at NCPA’s annual convention:

“The educational session we attended at lunch on Sunday regarding adherence was super beneficial. I had never really heard of these types of programs before, and it really opened my eyes and gave me new ideas that I can apply upon graduation. The presenters did a great job as well.”

“You kept on hitting the adherence program continuously for 6 hours...excellent idea.”

“I really enjoyed the...adherence sessions.”

“[I’d like to see even more] programs like adherence and other creative programs to maintain independent pharmacy competitiveness.”

“The adherence program...most valuable aspect of Convention.”
Preparation Tomorrow’s Pharmacists to Embrace Adherence

Toolkit Showcases Best Practices in Adherence Teaching

In April 2013, NCPA released the Medication Adherence Educators Toolkit, a workbook developed jointly with the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) featuring teaching tools to help prepare student pharmacists to detect, monitor, and improve medication adherence.

The toolkit represents a compilation of current best practices in adherence teaching strategies. It is the result of a year-long initiative that began with a challenge to schools and colleges of pharmacy to submit innovative adherence tools currently in use or development. Several of those submissions were presented and discussed at a special half-day adherence symposium at AACP’s 2012 Annual Meeting. Finally, NCPA selected a handful of the entries to be enhanced with assistance from a special advisory committee and included in the final toolkit.

The toolkit includes many great examples of classroom exercises, lab activities, and evaluation tools and is divided into four categories:

- Assessing medication adherence
- Improving adherence through the use of aids
- Empowering patients to improve adherence
- Resolving barriers to adherence

NCPA distributed the toolkit in April 2013 to the deans, curriculum chairs, pharmacy practice chairs, and other stakeholders at the nation’s 129 schools and colleges of pharmacy. It is also available online at www.ncpanet.org/educators. Additional follow up is planned to assess the adoption of the toolkit and identify enhancements for a second edition.

NCPA Recognizes Adherence Innovators

To increase awareness of the importance of medication adherence and recognize pharmacists who are leading the way, NCPA created two new annual adherence awards in 2012. The awards were first presented at NCPA’s 114th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in San Diego.

NCPA developed the Outstanding Adherence Practitioner Award to recognize a community pharmacist who demonstrates a commitment to improving medication adherence and improving patient outcomes in a community pharmacy setting.

The 2012 Outstanding Adherence Practitioner of the Year was Richard “Tripp” Logan, PharmD. Logan initiated an adherence program at his family’s pharmacy in southeast Missouri in 2006. The program’s 200+ patients benefit from a highly coordinated care model that includes their pharmacist and physician, and data from the program have shown adherence rates exceeding 95 percent.
NCPA created the Outstanding Adherence Educator Award to recognize a pharmacy educator who makes a significant contribution to the education of medication adherence. The 2012 Outstanding Adherence Educator of the Year was Ashley Branham, PharmD, BCACP.

Branham serves as an adjunct assistant professor at the University of North Carolina Eshelman School of Pharmacy. She also is the director of clinical services at Moose Pharmacy and clinical pharmacist at Cabarrus Family Medicine, where she serves as preceptor to more than 15 pharmacy students each year. Branham urges all of her students to become adherence advocates.

NCPA will present the 2013 awards at its 115th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in Orlando, Fla., October 12-16, 2013.

Students Carry the Adherence Message

NCPA remains a committed partner of the National Consumers League’s Script Your Future program, a national multi-year awareness campaign designed to help patients better manage their health by encouraging more open conversations between health care professionals and patients.

As a partner, NCPA was invited to participate in this year’s Script Your Future Medication Adherence Team Challenge, which encouraged pharmacy students to engage with other health profession students to develop creative ideas for raising awareness about medication adherence as a critical public health issue.

The contest saw participation by 1,700 future health care professionals, featured 200 events in 35 states, and reached more than 3 million consumers nationwide. The 2013 winners were St. Louis College of Pharmacy, the University of Charleston School of Pharmacy, the University of the Pacific Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy & Health Sciences, Touro University College of Pharmacy California, and the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy.
Pharmacists, Students ‘Team Up’ to Lower Blood Pressure

NCPA is proud to support Millions Hearts®, a public-private partnership that seeks to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. Heart disease and stroke are two of the leading causes of death in the United States, and many community pharmacists offer disease state management programs supporting the Million Hearts goal, including blood pressure and lipid monitoring, smoking cessation, and medication synchronization programs.

In recognition of the role pharmacists can play in improving heart health, Million Hearts launched a special initiative, Team Up. Pressure Down., to lower blood pressure and prevent hypertension through patient-pharmacist engagement. Earlier this year, NCPA and the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy kicked off a special Team Up. Pressure Down. Pioneer Challenge to encourage pharmacy schools to partner with local community pharmacies to help improve the nation’s heart health. The challenge runs through October 2013.

Students Consider Adherence in Business Plan Submissions

The Good Neighbor Pharmacy NCPA Pruitt-Schutte Student Business Plan Competition is the first national competition of its kind in the pharmacy profession. It challenges pharmacy students to create the blueprint necessary for buying an existing independent community pharmacy or to develop a new pharmacy providing unique patient care services.

In recent years, medication adherence has played an increasing role in student business plans for its positive impact on pharmacy revenue and patient care. In fact, the 2013 winning team, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, included NCPA’s Simplify My Meds medication synchronization program as part of its business plan.

The finalists for the 2013 business plan competition were announced at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy annual meeting in Chicago, July 13-17, 2013. The top three teams will compete in a live business plan competition at NCPA’s 115th Annual Convention and Trade Exposition in Orlando, Fla., October 12-16, 2013.

Students from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences included medication synchronization in their winning business plan. Pictured are team members (L-R): Tyler Shinabery, Tiffany Berkemeyer, Kevin Barton, Brandyn England, and Blake Johnson.
Connecting with Patients, Measuring Results

Year Two Progress Report

August 2012–July 2013

The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA®) represents the interests of America’s community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 23,000 independent community pharmacies. Together they represent an $88.5 billion health care marketplace, dispense nearly 40% of all retail prescriptions, and employ more than 300,000 individuals, including over 62,000 pharmacists. Independent community pharmacists are readily accessible medication experts who can help lower health care spending. To learn more, go to www.ncpanet.org.