Managing Treatment With Oral Oncology Medications
An Educational Toolkit for Health Care Providers
Acknowledgment

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Oral Oncology Medication Toolkit

Overview for Health Care Providers

When prescribing oral oncology medications, the framework and continuum of patient care may be considerably different from other forms of oncology treatment options. In this toolkit, various educational pieces as well as support resources are provided both in the form of provider-facing and patient-facing materials, as listed below. Specifically, the types of support resources provided throughout the toolkit include: fact sheets, checklists, question guides, flowsheet, and treatment calendar. While each organization’s setup and patient populations may be different, note that this toolkit is only intended to provide general considerations in navigating patient care with oral oncology medications.

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Components of an Oral Oncology Program
Considerations to Conduct Organizational Assessment
Question Guide

Given the estimated growth of oral oncology treatments, establishing the necessary infrastructure to support a comprehensive oral oncology program is important toward maintaining a clear course of patient care. To assist, this resource provides a general framework of review questions that are in line with a core set of key components for managing patient therapy with oral oncology medications. Specifically, this resource may be helpful to organizations that will need to conduct a readiness assessment toward developing a new oral oncology program, or to organizations that are looking to refine the processes of an existing program.

Operations, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- Managing flow patterns and operational processes specific to treating a patient who is prescribed oral oncology medications throughout the care continuum, from treatment planning and financial review through medication acquisition and educational training

Assessment, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- Conducting baseline patient readiness assessments to evaluate if patients are appropriate candidates for therapy with oral oncology medications

Access, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- Conducting financial review of patient access to insurance or other assistance programs, including identifying support resources
- Understanding the methods of acquiring oral oncology medications, most commonly through an in-house dispensing pharmacy or specialty pharmacy, including the specific considerations for each route of access

Treatment plan, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- Conducting comprehensive review of the patient’s medical care with oral oncology medications, including informed consent, obtaining clinical history, performing clinical evaluations and review, and developing an adherence plan, among other considerations

Communication, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- At a practice level, ensuring effective and coordinated communication among all providers who are part of a patient’s health care team
- At a patient level, understanding when and how to communicate with the health care team, including issues related to correctly administering the oral oncology medication, monitoring adherence, and managing side effects, among other considerations

Education, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- At a practice level, establishing an educational program and developing a curriculum as needed
- At a patient level, receiving educational training related to therapy with oral oncology medications
### Operations

**Questions for the organization to review internally**

1. What are your organization’s collective beliefs about oral oncology medications?

2. What are your current patterns of patient-flow with intravenous oncology treatments and how do you think the integration of orals will impact these patterns?

3. Where and when along the patient flow of care do you think issues may arise with patients taking oral oncology medications? Specifically, what do you anticipate these issues will be and how will you plan to address them?

4. Who within the organization will be responsible for leading the overall effort to develop new or refine existing processes related to the oral oncology program?

5. How do you anticipate staff roles changing with the implementation of an oral oncology program?

### Access

**Questions for the organization to review internally**

1. Who within the organization will be responsible for leading financial assessments and counseling for patients who are prescribed oral oncology medications?

2. How will patients be able to obtain their oral oncology medications (eg, through specialty pharmacy or in-house dispensing)?

3. If considering dispensing through in-house pharmacy, what will your organization need to review in terms of requirements (eg, stocking specialized items, credentialing with insurers, assessing if payers allow refills, complying with state regulations) and who will be responsible for leading this effort?

4. If considering routing through specialty pharmacy, what coordination of care and communication processes will your organization and specialty pharmacy establish (eg, monitoring and communicating patient adherence, tracking patient refills, notifying dose changes) and who will be responsible for leading this effort?

### Treatment Plan

**Questions for the organization to review internally**

1. Who within the organization will be responsible for developing the treatment plan specific to oral oncology medications?

2. What type of information will be included in a patient’s oral oncology treatment plan and how may this be different from an intravenous oncology treatment plan?

3. When will the treatment plan be reviewed with the patient and by whom?
Communication

Questions for the organization to review internally

1. What plans will your organization have in place to update current policies and procedures to integrate oral oncology medications; who will be responsible for leading this effort, and how will this be communicated within your practice?

2. How will patients be able to communicate with your organization and report issues with taking their oral oncology medications should they arise (eg, adherence, side effects, toxicity/safety concerns)

3. How does your organization anticipate that physician communication will change with the patients who are prescribed therapy with oral oncology medications and what type of training can your practice offer to address communication changes?

4. How will your organization communicate with other providers who are part of your patient’s health care team (eg, primary care physicians, specialists, specialty pharmacy)?

5. How will your organization verify that a patient’s prescription has been filled? What will be your follow-up and tracking procedures?

6. How will your organization support caregivers during a patient’s course of treatment with oral oncology medications? What type of resources does your organization have access to or need to develop?

7. How will your organization manage patient adherence and monitoring with oral oncology medications and what level of support will be offered?

Questions for the organization to review internally

1. What are your organization’s main areas of strengths and how can these strengths be leveraged?

2. What are your organization’s main areas of weakness and how can these weaknesses be addressed?

Organizational Assessment Outcome Summary

1. What are your organization’s main areas of strengths and how can these strengths be leveraged?

2. What are your organization’s main areas of weakness and how can these weaknesses be addressed?
When prescribing therapy with an oral oncology medication, the processes and flow of patient care is different compared to when prescribing therapy with intravenous oncology medication. While the structure and dynamics of each organization is different, this resource reviews sample considerations related to navigating a core set of key components for managing patient therapy with oral oncology medications.

### Operations
Operations, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- Managing flow patterns and operational processes specific to treating a patient who is prescribed oral oncology medications throughout the care continuum, from treatment planning and financial review through medication acquisition and educational training.

### Assessment
Assessment, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
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### Communication
Communication, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- At a practice level, ensuring effective and coordinated communication among all providers who are part of a patient’s health care team.
- At a patient level, understanding when and how to communicate with the health care team, including issues related to correctly administering the oral oncology medication, monitoring adherence, and managing side effects, among other considerations.

### Education
Education, as a core component of oral oncology management, involves:
- At a practice level, establishing an educational program and developing a curriculum as needed.
- At a patient level, receiving educational training related to therapy with oral oncology medications.
# Operations

**Questions for the organization to review internally**

1. Who in the organization will conduct the assessment with the patient?
2. Who in the organization will discuss access considerations with the patient, including financial review and medication acquisition?
3. Who in the organization will develop the treatment plan and review on an ongoing basis as needed?
4. Who in the organization will manage communication with other providers in the health care team as needed, as well as communicate with the patient and caregiver?
5. Who in the organization will provide educational training to the patient and caregiver?

# Assessment

**Questions for the health care team to review with the patient**

## Physical Ability

1. Have you taken any other pills before for your cancer diagnosis?
2. Do you have difficulty opening your medication bottle or blister-packs?
3. Are you able to read the label of your medication?
4. Do you feel you may have any difficulty keeping pills down?
5. Are you taking any other medications or supplements?

## Cognitive Ability

1. Do you know what type of cancer and what stage has been diagnosed?
2. Can you tell me the goal of your therapy?
3. Would you be able to tell me the name of your medication and what it looks like?
4. Do you feel you may have any difficulty understanding how and when to take your medication as well as keeping track of any side effects?
5. Do you feel anxious, upset, tired, or experience sleepiness that may affect taking your medication as prescribed?
6. Do you know what would happen if you don’t take your medication as prescribed?

## Safety

1. Where will you be storing your medications?
2. Do you have any school-aged children?
3. How do you typically dispose of medications?

## Communication Skills & Social Support

1. Is anyone assisting and providing support during your treatment, such as family members, friends, partners, caregiver, or any other contact?
2. Do you feel you will be able to take your medication based on a regular schedule, as prescribed?
3. Are you willing to follow physician and nurse instructions for your medication?
4. What do you think your role is during your treatment and what do you expect of me?

## Drug Acquisition & Access

1. Will you be able to come here regularly to fill your prescription (if dispensed through in-house pharmacy)?
2. Do you have a mailing address where your medication can be safely sent?
3. Can you drive in or arrange for transportation to come here regularly for routine follow-up appointments?
4. Would you have any difficulty paying for your medication?
5. Has your insurance ever prevented you from being able to obtain or fill your medication?

## Other Considerations

Do you have any other concerns that I should be aware of which may affect your ability to take oral medications? What can I do to help you?
### Access

**Considerations for the health care team to review and involve the patient as needed**

**Patient Financial Review**

1. Does the patient have insurance?
2. If yes, what is the name of the insurance company, name of the health plan, and if applicable, name of the pharmacy benefit manager?
3. Is the oral oncology medication covered under the patient’s health plan medical benefit or pharmacy benefit?
4. Does the patient’s health plan require prior authorization for the oral oncology medication before therapy initiation?
   - What information is required and how long will the prior authorization process take?
   - Once submitted, for how long will the prior authorization be valid?
5. What are the patient’s cost-sharing responsibilities?
   - What is the patient’s annual deductible? If the deductible has not yet been met in full, how much is remaining?
   - What is the patient’s maximum out-of-pocket requirement? If the maximum out-of-pocket requirement has not yet been met in full, how much is remaining?
   - What is the patient’s coinsurance or copayment requirement amount for the oral oncology medication?
6. Does the patient have any other secondary or supplemental insurance benefits that would require coordination?
7. Does the patient’s health plan have any specific coding or claims submission guidelines for reporting the oral oncology medication?
8. What assistance programs and/or foundations may be available to support the patient’s therapy?
9. What is the reimbursement amount provided for the oral oncology medication?
10. Would the patient be able to access medication samples, if available?

**Medication Acquisition Review**

1. Does the patient’s insurance mandate specific acquisition requirements for the oral oncology medication?
2. How will the patient acquire the oral oncology medication?

Considerations for the health care team to review and involve the patient as needed

### Treatment Plan

**Considerations for the health care team to review and involve the patient as needed**

**Informed Consent**

- Yes, my patient has provided signed, informed consent to receive treatment with oral oncology medication
- No, my patient has not provided signed, informed consent to receive treatment with oral oncology medication

**Medical & Treatment History**

1. Prior or current medical conditions, including length of therapy
2. Prior operations and hospitalizations
3. Concurrent therapies
4. Known allergies
5. Social considerations, such as drugs/alcohol/tobacco use, religion, sexual history, and employment status

**Clinical Evaluations**

Imaging studies/laboratory work/scans/tests

**Clinical Review**

1. Diagnosis
2. Stage of cancer
3. Medication schedule/cycle of therapy
4. Dosing
5. Dose reductions
6. Side effect profile
7. Toxicity profile
8. Medication interaction
9. Oral administration instructions
10. Follow-up tests
11. Prognosis

**Monitoring Plan**

1. Compliance tracking, including details on date/method/percentage of adherence
2. Schedule for routine, follow-up visits

**Progress Notes**
### Communication

**Considerations for the health care team to review and involve the patient as needed**

**Health Care Team Communication: Coordinating Therapy Management**

1. Communication to primary care physician advising of patient’s current therapy, including details on date and method of communication
2. Communication to other specialist advising of patient’s current therapy, including details on date and method of communication
3. Communication to specialty pharmacy advising of patient’s current therapy, including details on date and method of communication

**Patient and Caregiver Communication: Topics to Consider**

- Treatment plan and medication instructions
- Side effect management and support
- Adherence management and support
- Dietary considerations
- Drug access (in-house and specialty pharmacy)
- Medication storage
- Patient financial counseling
- Patient assistance considerations
- Emotional counseling
- Caregiver support and education
- Clinical trial participation
- Palliative/hospice care
- Cancer survivorship
- Risk and benefits of treatment options
- Sexuality

### Education

**Considerations for the health care team to review with the patient**

**Support Resources**

- Which of the following support resources have been provided to the patient?
  - Know the Facts – Getting Your Specialty Medication From a Specialty Pharmacy
  - Know the Facts – Medicare Part D: The Prescription Drug Program
  - Question Guide – Understanding the Treatment Plan: Questions for the Health Care Team
  - Checklist – Considerations to Help You Adhere to Treatment
  - Checklist – Considerations for Giving Care to Patients With Cancer
  - Other

**Educational Session**

Date/time of appointment, including details on method of delivery (eg, in-clinic/practice, phone, other site of care)

### Notes:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
**Medication Acquisition:** In-House Dispensing Pharmacy & Specialty Pharmacy

**Know the Facts**

When prescribing oral oncology medications, acquisition methods for patients typically involve obtaining the treatment either through an in-house dispensing pharmacy or specialty pharmacy. In this fact sheet, an overview of the benefits and challenges as well as considerations for each method are reviewed.

### In-House Dispensing Pharmacy

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<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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| 1. Support point-of-care dispensing and be willing to discuss with each patient the opportunity to obtain his or her prescribed medications  
2. Plan for point-of-care dispensing and devote the necessary time to successfully train all personnel  
3. Dispense oral oncology medications in an area of the office that is mindful of patient flow and individual state requirements  
4. Stock all medications generally required by patients as well as be mindful of volumes and averages  
5. Collect prescription drug benefit information on all patients as a routine part of patient check-in | • Is convenient and is housed inside of oncology offices  
• Has physicians and nurses available for questions  
• Has all personnel available so that double-check of prescriptions can be performed for safety  
• Has patient medical records readily available for questions | • Varying levels of physician supervision may be required, depending on regulations  
• Drug safety rules mandated by Healthcare Facilities Accreditation Program (HFAP), Joint Commission, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and public health rules require additional documentation and record-keeping |

### Specialty Pharmacy

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| 1. Case managers know when patients receive their medications and can educate patients at the outset about the course of therapy, side effects, and dosing schedule  
2. Medication therapy management service informs case managers when to be on the lookout for specific toxicities and other issues that clinical trials and other patient experiences have made apparent  
3. Physicians receive regular e-mails and phone calls from case managers regarding their patients taking oral oncology medications | • Provides additional patient education by phone or mail  
• Delivers medication to patient at no additional costs  
• Likely able to custom pack doses to avoid multiple copayments  
• Works closely with various insurance plans | • Potential challenge with communication about patient care between the specialty pharmacy and oncology practice  
• Patients may have concerns about working with a pharmacy by phone |

**References:**
