

Medication Acquisition: In-House Dispensing Pharmacy and 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, challenges, and considerations for each method are reviewed.

In-House Dispensing Pharmacy

Considerations for Health Care Providers and Staff

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 and be mindful of volumes and averages
5. Collect prescription drug benefit information on all patients as a routine part of patient check-in

Benefits

Challenges

In-House Dispensing Pharmacy

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is convenient and housed inside oncology offices • Has physicians and nurses available for questions • Has all personnel available so that double-checking of prescriptions can be performed for safety • Has patient medical records readily available for questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
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Specialty Pharmacy

Considerations for Health Care Providers and Staff

1. Case managers know when patients receive their medications and can educate them at the outset about their particular 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

Benefits

Challenges

Specialty Pharmacy

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 co-payments • Works closely with various insurance plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
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Reference: Oncology Nursing Society. Adherence to oral therapies for cancer: helping your patients stay on course toolkit. Oncology Nursing Society website. <https://www.ons.org/sites/default/files/oral%20adherence%20toolkit.pdf>. Updated November 1, 2009. Accessed June 25, 2018.