CASE STUDY

Conversational Solution Promotes Medication Adherence in a Medicare Population

Managing the care of any population in the US inevitably includes promoting medication adherence. Payers in all markets understand keeping members compliant with their prescriptions is a core component of chronic condition management and controlling the costs and worse outcomes that result from nonadherence. Medicare and Part D plans, subject to triple-weighted CMS Star Rating measures for adherence, are even more concerned with encouraging members to stay adherent.

Medication adherence is vital to long-term outcomes in members with chronic conditions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates non-adherence accounts for 30–50% of all chronic condition treatment failures and 25,000 deaths per year in the US. The scope of nonadherence is enormous, with an estimated 20–30% of all prescriptions in the US never being filled at pharmacies.[1] Leading pharmacies, plans, and managed care organizations understand that adherence strategies center on member action and are reducing friction in the refill process by using solutions that leverage conversational engagement.

One of the most innovative families of Blue Cross Blue Shield plans in the US understood the importance of each member's connection to their health plan, and how a strong relationship can activate them to take important action. This study explores how their plans, which cover over 2.6 million lives in multiple states, put members at the core of their adherence strategy—building and strengthening a connection to each member to drive action. They partnered with mPulse Mobile to deploy a conversational engagement solution to boost medication adherence and improve member experience.

Goals

The plans sought to improve medication adherence in their Medicare members who had been prescribed medication for chronic condition. By encouraging timely prescription refills, they would improve proportion of days covered (PDC), the key metric for CMS Star Ratings' Medication Adherence measures, and help keep members on track with their treatment plans. They implemented the mPulse solution to increase refill rates for members that needed medication in a way that was both efficient and improved member experience.

The use of an automated and conversational solution presented opportunities beyond refill rate improvement. The solution would also uncover barriers to adherence at the individual level, providing data to improve adherence strategy. An interactive initial message would help ensure follow up reminders would go to the members that requested them and ensure member preferences were being met.

Execution

The plan group identified approximately 20,000 members in multiple states who were due or past due to refill a chronic condition medication. mPulse Mobile's Medication Adherence Solution was implemented to deliver reminders for members to refill prescriptions at their preferred pharmacy. The members received targeted automated text messages about their upcoming refill and additional reminders they could opt into. Members who failed to renew received additional conversations to uncover barriers they may be facing.

Members who requested additional reminders would also receive a follow up survey on the usefulness of the program. Member responses to all texts were categorized and reported back to the plans with additional sentiment and intent analysis. mPulse's team would also analyze refill adherence barriers, to help make insights actionable. Finally, the solution would also analyze the impact of Social Determinants of Health on refill rates and engagement using mPulse's SDOH Index, which leverages public and private data to model SDOH influence on engagement programs and behavior change.

Results

The conversational solution was highly successful in driving outcomes for the plans and their quality teams. Of the 20,000 due or past-due members who received initial text reminders, 23% opted into the additional reminder program, suggesting a high level of usefulness and channel preference. The members who requested additional messages refilled medications at a rate of 84%. This meant over 4,000 additional refills and exceeded the mPulse and the plan teams' goals for the solution.

Over 480 members reported barriers to adherence when asked by the conversational solution. Members that the mPulse SDOH Index had identified as more impacted by SDOH tended to cite cost as a barrier, while having leftover medication was common throughout demographics. Members who identified barriers received responses configured to connect them to appropriate plan resources. Member feedback for the program was very strong, with 72% of survey responses providing "very positive" feedback on how valuable the reminders were to the member.

Conclusion

The success of the Medication Adherence solution from mPulse prompted the plan group and the mPulse team to explore ways to optimize further. Tailoring responses to members who are new to their medication and using surveys to assess overall health literacy were identified as possible next steps as the plans continue to innovate. The Medication Adherence solution has become one of several mPulse solutions that this Blue Cross Blue Shield group uses to connect with members, build relationships through conversations, and encourage healthy behaviors.

STUDY RESULTS

23% **RECIPIENTS WHO OPTED INTO THE ADDITIONAL REMINDER PROGRAM**

84% **OPTED-IN MEMBERS WHO REFILLED MEDICATIONS THROUGH THE PROGRAM**

480 **MEMBERS WHO REPORTED ADHERENCE BARRIERS WHEN ASKED BY SOLUTION**

72% **MEMBERS REPORTING "VERY POSITIVE" FEEDBACK ON REMINDERS**

mPulse
mobile

References
1. Nieman et al 2017 "CDC Grand Rounds: Improving Medication Adherence for Chronic Disease Management — Innovations and Opportunities" https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6645a2.htm

About mPulse Mobile

mPulse Mobile, the leader in Conversational AI solutions for the healthcare industry, drives improved health outcomes and business efficiencies by engaging individuals with tailored and meaningful dialogue. mPulse Mobile combines behavioral science, analytics and industry expertise that helps healthcare organizations activate their consumers to adopt healthy behaviors.

With over a decade of experience,100+ healthcare customers and more than 300 million conversations annually, mPulse Mobile has the data, the expertise and the solutions to drive healthy behavior change.

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