



Optimizing Health by Advancing the Quality of Medication Use

PRESS RELEASE

PQA and NPC Fund Two Research Projects to Address Medication Access Barriers

Projects will study the impact of socioeconomic factors and tools on patient access

Alexandria, Va. (June 24, 2020) – The Pharmacy Quality Alliance (PQA) and the National Pharmaceutical Council (NPC) today announced two research grants to address barriers patients face in accessing needed medications.

Researchers at The Johns Hopkins Hospital and the University of Rhode Island have each received a grant to study patients' real-world medication access problems. The projects will leverage the recent PQA and NPC [framework](#) that defines the patient journey to medication access and identifies quality measurement gaps that could address the financial and non-financial factors that stand between patients and the medications they need.

A team of researchers at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, led by Jessica Merrey, PharmD, a clinical pharmacy specialist in ambulatory care, and Jeremy Epstein, MD, assistant professor of medicine, will explore the impact of a real-time prescription benefit (RTPB) tool on patient access to prescriptions. The study aims to determine whether the use of an RTPB tool during the prescribing process affects the rate of changes to initial prescription, time between initial prescription and when medication was available to the patient and medication abandonment or cancellation rate.

At the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy, Ami Vyas, PhD, an assistant professor of health outcomes, will lead a study to identify significant patient access barriers and facilitators of adherence with oral anticancer medications. The study will examine patient out-of-pocket costs, socioeconomic characteristics, clinical factors and subsequent health outcomes.

“Medication access is critical to high-quality, value-based healthcare,” said Laura Cranston, RPh, PQA’s CEO. “We are delighted to partner with the National Pharmaceutical Council to support two research studies that build on last year’s Medication Access Patient Journey Framework and advance national efforts to address the complex barriers patients face in accessing medications. Our hope is that these projects can leverage the framework to strengthen access-focused screening tools or identify quality measure concepts.”

“Ideally, this research will give us a deeper understanding of how we can address the barriers patients face not only in accessing medications, but also in maintaining their overall health,” said Kimberly Westrich, NPC vice president of health research services. “The pandemic and spotlight on racial injustice have further exposed the major impact that socioeconomic factors have on health outcomes and that we need to heighten our efforts to address those issues. We’re pleased that our work with PQA and these projects will aid those efforts.”

These are 12-month research projects that will begin in June. Findings will be presented at a PQA-hosted meeting in 2021. NPC is funding the research grants, which will be managed by PQA.

Pharmacy Quality Alliance: PQAalliance.org

National Pharmaceutical Council: npcnow.org

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