

# Improving Patient Health and Your Bottom Line

## Antibiotic Stewardship Programs

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Nearly 2 million Americans are sickened every year due to antibiotic resistance. In the U.S. alone, inappropriate use of antibiotics has contributed to \$21B–\$41B in rising healthcare costs.<sup>1</sup> To help curb this growing trend, antibiotic stewardship programs (ASPs) are becoming a top priority among some pharmacy leaders.

For long-term care facilities (LTCFs), ASPs offer a host of benefits ranging from improved patient health and public safety to cost savings. As a partner to LTCFs, it is important to understand the underlying causes of antibiotic resistance, the current and future impact on your patient population, and the role your pharmacy can play in supporting an effective ASP.

### Antibiotic resistance on the rise

More than 4 million Americans currently reside in LTCFs, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 50–70% percent of them receive some type of antibiotic treatment every year.<sup>2,3</sup> Although antibiotics play an important role in improving the health of this patient population, some drugs are unnecessarily or inappropriately prescribed. As a result, we are seeing an increase in antibiotic resistance in the treatment of issues like urinary tract infections (UTIs), diarrheal diseases and staph infections. In addition, patients are suffering adverse effects leading to longer, more expensive hospital stays.

### Opportunities for your pharmacy

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging, the population of those 65 years and older is expected to nearly double by 2050.<sup>4</sup> Based on that projection, your LTC pharmacy is well positioned to help enhance the quality of care for seniors through the safe use of medications not only now, but also in the years ahead. In addition, changes across the continuum of care including new performance-based payment models mean that hospitals will continue to look toward LTCFs to help improve patient outcomes and reduce readmissions. As a result, long-term care pharmacists will continue to play an important role in helping to ensure that the right medications are delivered to the right patients at the right time.

**\$38M–  
137M**

Annual Antibiotic Costs for LTCFs<sup>2</sup>



**25–75%**  
Antibiotics Misused in Nursing Homes<sup>7</sup>



**72M**  
65 Years+ by the Year 2030<sup>4</sup>

## Your role in antibiotic stewardship

Currently, there are no federal mandates requiring the implementation of ASPs. For some long-term care pharmacies, antibiotic stewardship tends to focus on obtaining accurate culture and sensitivity data along with stop dates — both of which are the basis for regulatory review by pharmacy-based state inspectors.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, there is a significant emphasis on antibiotic utilization. This typically includes ensuring the appropriate therapy and dosage of oral antibiotics, which are commonly used to treat UTIs, Clostridium difficile and upper respiratory issues, and intravenous antibiotics, which help to treat soft tissue infections like decubitus ulcers.

Other ways your pharmacy can help reduce drug resistance and support ASPs include:

- **Offer education and counseling** — Provide your staff with infectious disease training. In addition, consider counseling your customers on appropriate antibiotic use and adherence.
- **Open lines of communication** — Have dedicated personnel responsible for communicating directly with patients and their caregivers to ensure the proper handling, storage and use of medications.
- **Monitor and analyze antibiotic usage** — With the right tools and technology, you can track antibiotic usage and resistance along with your drug spend. This information will allow you to better identify trends and opportunities for improvement.
- **Establish policies and protocols** — Based on the information and best practices that you have collected, you can develop clear guidelines for diagnosis and treatments.<sup>6</sup>

## Where to find additional information

To learn more about antibiotic stewardship, including examples of successful programs, visit the CDC's Get Smart website ([www.cdc.gov/getsmart](http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart)). The American Hospital Association ([www.ahaphysicianforum.org](http://www.ahaphysicianforum.org)) also offers a host of online resources including an Antimicrobial Stewardship Toolkit to help LTCFs and hospitals start and maintain a program. Last, the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network ([www.cdc.gov/nhsn/LTC/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/LTC/index.html)) provides a system to report infections.

## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> [2013 Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the U.S.](#), CDC, January 22, 2013

<sup>2</sup> [Get Smart for Healthcare — Antibiotic Use in Nursing Homes](#), CDC, January 22, 2015

<sup>3</sup> [Nursing Homes and Assisted Living \(Long-Term Care Facilities\)](#), CDC, January 22, 2015

<sup>4</sup> [Projected Future Growth of the Older Population](#), Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, June 23, 2010

<sup>5</sup> [State Operations Manual Appendix PP — Guidance to Surveyors for Long-Term Care Facilities](#), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, February 6, 2015

<sup>6</sup> [Get Smart for Healthcare — Core Elements of Hospital Antibiotic Stewardship Programs](#), CDC, January 22, 2015

<sup>7</sup> [Antibiotic Stewardship Programs in Long-Term Care Facilities](#), Annals of Long Term Care, April 12, 2011

## About the authors:

**Chris Mangione** has more than 25 years of healthcare experience and currently serves as the Sr. Director National Accounts for the McKesson Alternate Site Pharmacy business. In this role, he partners with key stakeholders on solutions that help alternate site pharmacy customers grow their business, increase efficiency and improve their financial outcomes.

Chris holds a bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from the University of Toledo – College of Pharmacy and an executive MBA from Baldwin-Wallace College. He has had a diverse career touching several facets of pharmacy that include product and clinical account management with Pfizer, Medicare Part D and Humana. He has also held positions as a life science consultant and most recently as the LTC Corporate VP of Clinical and Utilization Management with PharMerica.

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