

Nearly 28.5 million Americans are uninsured or underinsured, leaving them exposed to medical costs they can't afford.<sup>1</sup> For these patients and the hospitals and health systems that provide their care, patient assistance programs (PAPs) can help relieve financial pressures by offering free medications and devices and co-pay assistance. PAPs also play a critical role in promoting medication adherence and a strong relationship between the patient and the pharmacist.

# Three steps to achieve more with your patient assistance program

*By Craig Dolan, VP, Pharmacy Services, McKesson RxO<sup>®</sup>*

According to industry sources, some hospitals and health systems with PAPs have recouped nearly 2–3% of their annual drug spend — a recovery that may measure into the millions of dollars for larger organizations. However, securing this aid can be extremely challenging. PAPs are often complex and difficult to manage. Plus, constantly changing PAP eligibility requirements and an abundance of paperwork can put a significant strain on pharmacy staff time and resources.

With continual changes in PAPs, here are three ways to help your hospital or health system maximize recovery efforts to support your continuum of care:

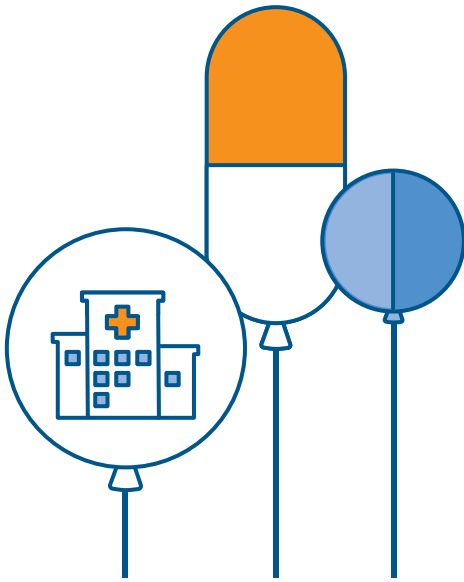
## Partner with a PAP expert

By partnering with a PAP expert, hospitals and health systems can more efficiently explore all options for cost recovery while continuing to focus on progress with regard to patient care. It's important to look for a partner that has the expertise and ability to manage the entire PAP process — from patient paperwork through reconciliation of drug packaging information and application forms.

## Invest in robust PAP software

Currently, over 80 pharmaceutical manufacturers offer PAPs.<sup>2</sup> However, one of the challenges is proactively monitoring manufacturer changes for each program. Manufacturers are also tightening the criteria to qualify for PAPs and requiring more documentation. For pharmacy staff, it's important to have a system for finding, qualifying, enrolling and tracking patients eligible for PAPs in an ever-changing program environment.

With the right insights and analytics, you can alleviate a number of these challenges and save your pharmacy staff valuable time. Today, robust PAP programs offer a wide range of capabilities. For example, they often store patient data, auto-populate required forms, and streamline and track the status of PAP applications.



*By determining whether a patient is eligible for a PAP from the beginning of treatment, **an in-house resource can identify the therapies needed** to treat the patient and what PAPs are available to aid in the patient's care.*

With McKesson's new First Dose technology, PAP patients can be identified prior to them coming in for treatments rather than not being identified until after treatment or after a hospital referral has been made. By integrating directly with hospital scheduling data, we ensure that patients are automatically identified ahead of time. First Dose technology can help health systems achieve decreased hospital involvement, streamlined workflows, increased PAP savings and reduced delays in patient treatment.

## **Have a dedicated in-house resource manage PAPs**

Successful participation in PAPs requires engagement from different hospital or health system departments. It's beneficial to dedicate an in-house resource to manage PAPs on the intake side of patient care. By determining whether a patient is eligible for a PAP from the beginning of treatment, an in-house resource can identify the therapies needed to treat the patient and what PAPs are available to aid in the patient's care. Sometimes, if a patient has already started treatment, the opportunity to engage with a PAP has passed. That's why it's important that hospitals are on top of PAP management at the time of patient intake.

As healthcare costs continue to increase, caring for disadvantaged patients will have a significant impact on the business performance of hospitals and health systems. With the help of PAPs, your organization can ensure that patients receive cost-effective medications they need while helping you capture revenue by maximizing PAP recovery.

To learn how McKesson RxO can help maximize your PAP recovery, contact us at [healthsystems@mckesson.com](mailto:healthsystems@mckesson.com).

### **About the author:**

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<sup>1</sup> "Key Facts about the Uninsured Population." (September 29, 2016). Retrieved June 22, 2017, from <http://www.kff.org/uninsured/fact-sheet/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/>

<sup>2</sup> Choudhry, N. K., Lee, J. L., Agnew-Blais, J., and Corcoran, C. (May/June 2009). "Drug Company-Sponsored Patient Assistance Programs: A Viable Safety Net?" Retrieved June 28, 2017, from <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/28/3/827.long>

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