Optum Rx®

3 steps to slash medication costs

An employer's guide to reduce health care spending

See how

Like most employers, you're grappling with skyrocketing prescription costs. But how you address that challenge differs based on your organization's unique population and pharmacy benefit goals. Your mix of solutions should be as unique as your organization.

Cost-saving measures include everything from:



Improving formulary design



Adjusting where and how prescriptions are filled or administered



Target expensive prescription medications for savings

Here, we've outlined three steps that can help you to significantly lower costs.

1

[Pay for value](#)

2

[Take a good look at specialty costs](#)

3

[Simplify complex care](#)

Step 1: Pay for value

Build a clinical foundation based on value



When building a strong clinical foundation, it's best to group medications in tiers according to cost.

Value-based formularies are focused on delivering the greatest value for your prescription spend. Medications are preferred based on their ability to deliver clinical benefit at the lowest net cost, whether they are rebated or not, and whether they are generic, brand or specialty.

Medications that add cost without any clinical benefit are excluded. As consumers take on more of the burden for drug costs via cost-sharing, a value-based approach makes it easier for them to afford the medications they need to get well and stay well.

Design a value-based formulary that improves:

Clinical quality

Your formulary should exclude high-cost drugs that demonstrate little or no improvement over comparable lower-cost medications.

That way you won't pay for medications that don't work.

Cost-effectiveness

Your formulary should limit the number of clinically proven therapies for specified medical conditions. Each group (or tier) should include only medications that offer the best clinical value and cost-effective price.

Consumer affordability

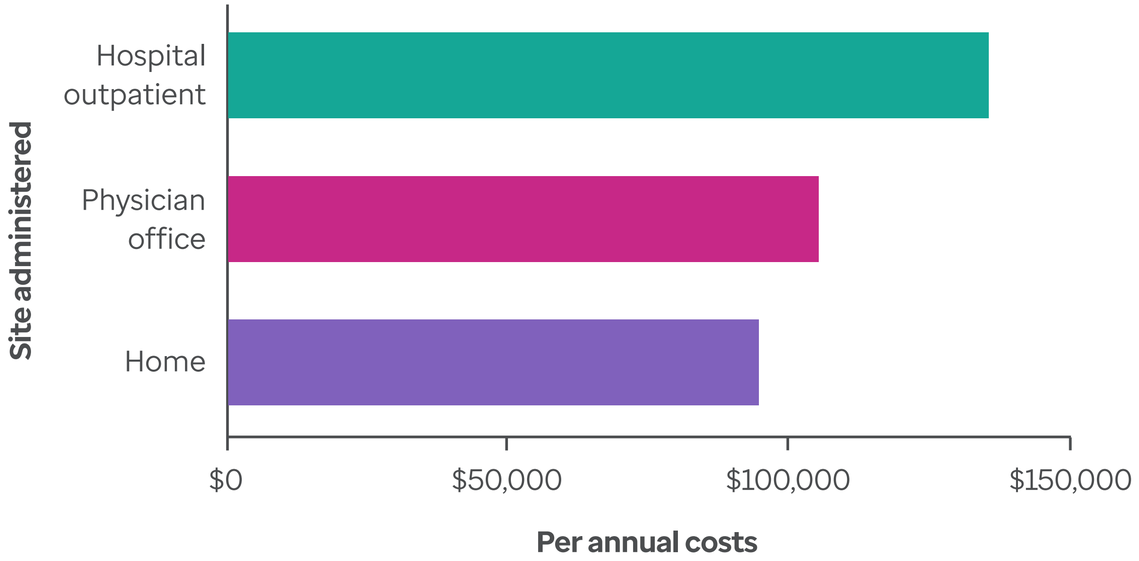
If there is more than one clinically effective drug in a class, a value-based formulary design can help patients save money by offering quality medications that work at the lowest cost.

Step 2: Take a good look at specialty costs

Keep an eye on infusion therapy costs

Specialty medications account for just 2% of prescriptions, but 53% of annual pharmacy spend.[1] While specialty medications can be administered in a variety of ways, infusion therapies are a key driver of recent increases in specialty drug costs. Not only can infusion therapies be expensive, their cost can vary widely according to where they are administered.

This graph illustrates the cost differences by site of care for Ocrevus®, which controls in excess of 66% of the market for multiple sclerosis drugs[2]:



Source: Journal of Medical Economics. Real-world cost of care and site of care in patients with multiple sclerosis initiating infused disease-modifying therapies. Published April 3, 2023.



Use a comprehensive approach to manage costs across benefits

Another unique aspect of specialty medications is that their costs occur across both the medical and pharmacy benefits. To control costs, a comprehensive solution that fuses different approaches to help address extreme price variations for professionally infused or injected medications is essential.



Meet providers where they are

Enable providers to bill their medical services with the medications at a flat rate, so they can provide the same quality care and save.

Bring medication to the provider

Use a specialty pharmacy to prescribe, fill and deliver medications to the provider in the hospital for administration.

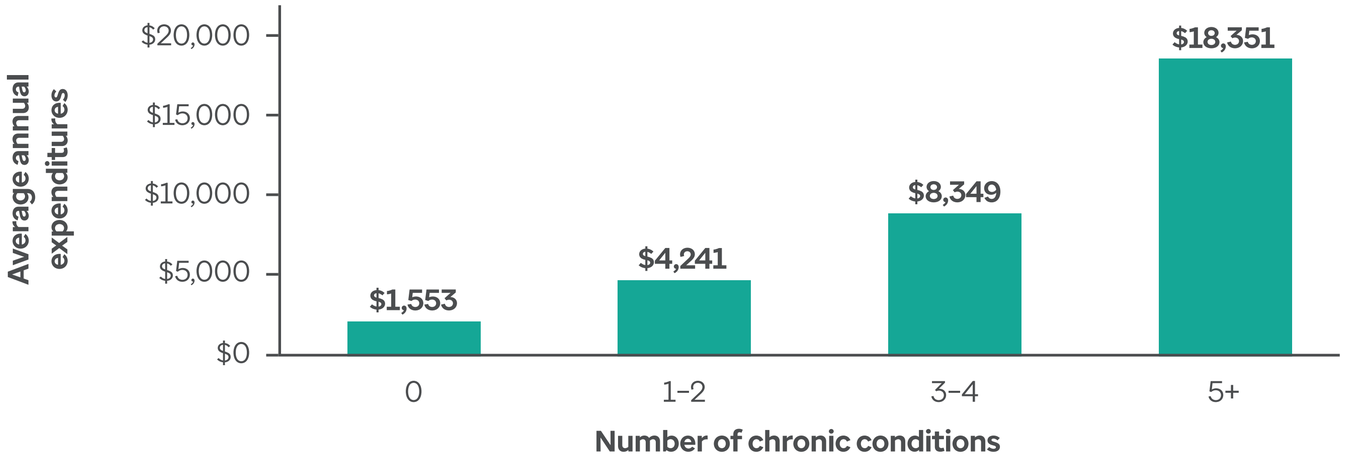
Step 3: Simplify complex care

People with chronic conditions need extra support

Many patients have multiple chronic conditions. The more conditions a person has, the more medications they take. This further complicates their care and the costs associated with it.

An estimated **6 in 10** Americans has a chronic health condition.[3]

Average annual health care expenditures for people with private insurance[4]





Help people with multiple conditions manage their treatment

Apply a three-part strategy to help people manage complex care regimens.



Identification

Patients with complex conditions may see several different specialists, each of whom may prescribe medications. As a result, these patients end up taking multiple medications. Using advanced analytic technologies, pharmacy benefit managers can identify opportunities to intervene for better care.

Intervention

Clinical pharmacists review all the medications a patient is taking and work with them and their physicians to optimize treatment. Our assessments cover the complete spectrum of issues, from dosage adjustments to medication cessation. In addition to saving money on unnecessary prescriptions, this hands on counseling can help people avoid adverse drug events.

Pharmacy care delivery

Synchronizing prescription deliveries and refill dates and pre-sorting all the medications a person is prescribed into a single daily pack simplifies daily life and supports adherence.

How Optum Rx can help

Given the scale and intricacy of climbing prescription costs, Optum Rx has reinvented the traditional pharmacy benefit manager business model with a more comprehensive approach.

Our innovative tools and strategies give you many ways to address these issues on multiple fronts.

To help you build a stronger clinical foundation, we offer:

- Value-based contracting
- Adherence and monitoring
- The Optum Rx Vigilant Drug Program®

To help you control specialty costs, we offer:

- Clinical expertise and utilization management
- Gene Therapy Risk Protection
- Specialty Standards
- Optum Rx Review My Care Drug Program

To help you address complex care, we offer:

- How to contain GLP-1 costs
- Medication consultations
- Prescription synchronization
- Condition management
- Multi-dose packaging

Your pharmacy partner

We deliver proven results for employers.

The tools and strategies we've shared can help you combat the rising cost of prescription medications.

Take three smart steps now that lead to huge savings: build a strong clinical foundation, control specialty costs and address complex care.

Explore more

This just scratches the surface. Reach out to us and we'll connect you with a representative to discuss the full range of cost-saving solutions we offer.

Stay informed on pharmacy trends, industry news and Optum Rx innovations.

Visit **optum.com/optumrx**.

About Optum Rx

Optum Rx is a pharmacy care services company helping clients and more than 60 million members achieve better health outcomes and lower overall costs through innovative prescription drug benefits services.

Sources

1. IQVIA Institute. The Use of Medicines in the U.S. Published May 27, 2021. Accessed Sept. 29, 2021.
2. Definitive Healthcare. Top 10 medications used to treat multiple sclerosis. Published December 16, 2022. Accessed March 8, 2024.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Chronic Diseases in America. Page last reviewed January 12, 2021. Accessed April 6, 2021.
4. Rand Corporation. Multiple Chronic Conditions in the United States. Published 2017. Accessed April 6 ,2021.

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