

COST SAVING STRATEGIES TO OBTAIN PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATIONS

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Which of our Patients Find Difficulty Obtaining Medications and Why?

- Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Asylees
- Immigration Status may Limit Eligibility for Assistance
- Most Disadvantaged are Those Lacking Immigration Status, i.e. Asylum Seekers

Outline of Some Medication Resources

- Patient Assistance Programs
- Pharmacy Programs
- Other Strategies

Patient Assistance Programs (PAP)

- Most major pharmaceutical companies operate a PAP
- Intended to provide low or no-cost meds
- Often provide 3 month supply of meds
 - Sometimes continuation possible

PAP Eligibility Criteria

- Lack of Uniformity of Criteria Necessitates Investigation of Each Program
 - Some have very strict criteria, some less so
- The Bad News: Most Require Citizenship or Permanent Residency
- The Good News: Some Don't Inquire re Immigration Status, So All Can Apply

Steps for Acceptance by a PAP

- Determine Medication Needed by Patient
 - i.e., *Lexapro*
- Determine Manufacturer(s)
 - i.e., *Forest Pharmaceuticals*
- Research if manufacturer has a PAP
- If So, Research Eligibility Criteria and Obtain Application
 - Information is often available on-line

Roles

- **Caseworker** Can Research PAP, Obtain Correct Application
- **Patient** Will Fill Out and Sign Form
 - Often with Caseworker support

Roles

- **Physician**-Portion of Application Indicating Medication and Dosage
- Provide Address Receiving Medication
 - MUST be an agency or medical office address
- Attach *Original* Prescription to Application
- Sign and Date

Receiving Medication

- Patient Name, Type of Medication and Dosage Will be on the Package from the PAP
- A Re-Application Form is Sometimes Included

PAP Re-Application

- Patient Must Continue to Meet PAP's Eligibility Criteria
- Same Application Form Typically Used for Re-Application
 - Often allows indication of a new or continuing applicant

Pharmacy Programs

- Many of the Large (usually National) Pharmacies also have Extensive, Low-Cost, Generic Medication Programs
 - Eg, *Wal-Mart, Target, Costco*
- Discount Card Applications Often Available at the Drug Store
 - Eg, *Long's, Walgreens*
- Each Maintains List of Medications They Cover
 - Sometimes regard list as proprietary

Pharmacy Programs

- The Good News: Most Don't have Immigration Eligibility Criteria
 - Some do require identification
- The Bad News: Not all Medication Categories are Included
 - Eg, psychotropics

Other Strategies

- Prescribe Generic Medications When Available
- Pharmaceutical Company Representatives
 - Companies will send sales representative if requested
 - Reps often provide medication trial samples
 - Usually responsive to requests for specific medication samples

Other Strategies

- Medication Samples can be Used to Initiate and Maintain Patients for Limited Time Period
- Representatives Sometimes Able to Provide Larger Amounts of Soon to Expire Medicine

Other Strategies

- The Good News

- Sales representative can provide patient access to expensive, up to date medications, across categories

- The Bad News

- Physician time consumed by sales presentation
- May not be able to obtain sufficient, on-going medication access for patient maintenance
- Ethical issue of participating in commercial model of medication sales

Resources

- Searchable, easy to use sites for correct forms to apply for specific medications
 - <http://www.rxassist.org/>
 - <http://www.pparx.org/Intro.php>