



NCPDP Member Interview

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You were identified as one of NCPDP's Specialty Pharmacy experts. What is your professional role in that realm?

I am the vice president of industry relations for the Community Specialty Pharmacy Network (CSPN). As the name implies, we are a group of 230 community-based specialty pharmacies located all over the country and responsible for almost \$1 billion in specialty sales. The challenges our group faces are not only from a managed care perspective but also access to specialty products through the manufacturers. Our goal at CSPN is to represent the group as a collective and provide them with as many opportunities as possible both from a managed care and a manufacturer point of view. The organization was founded a number of years ago. Initially it was run by its board of directors and the focus was to bring pharmacies in under the CSPN umbrella; commercialization of the opportunity began almost four years ago. I was brought on by CSPN about 2 ½ years ago to focus on the industry partners and I have a counterpart who focuses on supporting the managed care constituents.

How did you originally become involved with NCPDP?

Almost two years ago Phillip Scott, senior vice president of business development, for NCPDP, invited CSPN to participate in a focus group on specialty pharmacy services with a goal of figuring out how NCPDP fits into the specialty pharmacy world. The focus group was well attended by specialty pharmacies, managed care organizations and industry partners, and the participants left with an understanding of where NCPDP could help. The specialty setting has several touch points with the patient, managing their compliance with the therapy, and there is really no standardized mechanism to bill for those services provided under the claim. We thought there might be an opportunity to address this need through an NCPDP standard.

Can you explain the main problem facing the industry in regard to Specialty?

From an industry point of view, there is no standardized mechanism for collecting the data points needed, so each entity must reinvent the wheel every time they enter a specialty product into a program. Since about 75 percent of the data elements are the same, the thought process was to develop a standard that incorporates those data points so only minimal changes are needed to differentiate between different medications.

How has the partnership with NCPDP evolved?

We originally identified opportunities, from a managed care point of view, in Work Group 1 for Telecom and Work Group 11 for ePrescribing. A *Specialty Pharmacy Services Task Group* was created, with Tommy Cohn (from Armada Health Care) and I as co-chairs. We recently broke the task group into three work streams:

- In Work Group 7 with Paul Hooper for the manufacturer transmissions
- In Work Group 1 with Lynne Gilbertson actively seeking a chair for that group
- In Work Group 11 with Laura Topor as it relates to ePrescribing

There is also an active collaboration with the Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) task group because the management of a REMS process is very much related to specialty pharmacy as well.

How do you see NCPDP helping with the future of Specialty Pharmacy?

NCPDP will help the future of specialty pharmacy, and is helping today, through standardizing some of the behaviors, transmissions and services being offered. Specialty pharmacy is a fragmented distribution channel at this point in time. One of the challenges a provider faces when trying to wrap their hands around a specialty product or patient is that uniqueness of the products. Often the products are first in class, they don't have a competitive product (although more and more products are coming out and creating more competition), and providers need to standardize submissions into a regular stream so a new process does not have to be completed from scratch for each and every product. That standardization alone is a huge advancement and will help in setting up programs and getting them running more efficiently, both from a managed care point of view and from an industry point of view.

And for fun, Nick, where can we find you on your days off?

Running, though I do that most days, and on the golf course or hanging out at the pool with the kids.