

# 6 Benefits of Partnering with an LTC Pharmacy for PACE Organizations

The PACE model of care is one of the most innovative, valuable and effective programs promoting the highest level of independence for older adults with complex health care needs. PACE participants have a wide range of health profiles, prognoses, personal preferences, quality of life concerns and wellness goals. Despite this diversity, one tenant holds true: medication adherence is recognized as a central component in maximizing therapeutic outcomes for each individual. Yet ensuring medication adherence can be a challenge for PACE organizations. A strong partnership with the right pharmacy can make medication management easier.

The average PACE participant is 80 years old and has seven or more medical conditions, including chronic diseases, e.g., diabetes, dementia, coronary artery disease, and cerebrovascular disease. These older adults with complex needs take on average 10 to 11 medications. When PACE organizations work with multiple pharmacies or rely on mail-order pharmacy services, it can complicate the ability for staff to provide safe, efficient medication management. The reliance on multiple medication sources can lead to inconsistent workflows, medication order delays, and after-hours inaccessibility creating additional burden for staff who must track and control medication orders and deliveries.

Further, due to the unique challenges PACE organizations face including a continuing workforce shortage, they must make operational decisions that balance providing high-quality care for these complex participants in a fiscally responsible manner with the need to recruit and retain top talent.

But partnering with a long-term care (LTC) pharmacy equipped with the latest technology and expertise will simplify medication management and improve care coordination and efficiencies, enabling staff to provide safe, high-quality, participant-centered care while also containing costs for the organization.

## BENEFITS OF PARTNERING WITH AN LTC PHARMACY

### 1 | 24/7 Pharmacy Access with Local Deliveries and Emergency Service

LTC pharmacies understand the unique operations and complexities of PACE organizations and tailor their services to specifically support them. With 24/7 customer service and after-hours and emergency deliveries, organizations can count on these specialty pharmacies to be available when needed. In contrast to the standard mail-order pharmacy service, an LTC pharmacy's local delivery model with routine and emergency deliveries improves turnaround times for critical medications and guarantees they are delivered on time and to the right place.

### 2 | Senior Care Know-How & Staff Development Resources

LTC pharmacies specialize in the care of older adults with complex needs and employ experienced senior care pharmacists whose expertise can prevent adverse drug events, drug interactions, and other medication-related complications. Further, they can offer value-added services such as routine medication regimen reviews, helping improve adherence and therapeutic outcomes. The LTC pharmacy team also includes nurses that can serve as an educational resource for staff by providing additional training and support. Additionally, on-site vaccination clinics for participants offers an extra layer of safety.

### 3 | Cost Management and Savings

LTC pharmacies understand the cost-management priorities of PACE organizations. By partnering with leading pharmacy benefit managers (PBM), an LTC pharmacy can utilize the extensive services and resources of a PBM, enhancing PACE program compliance and efficiency in reporting. PACE organizations also gain access to experienced billing specialists who have a comprehensive understanding of Medicare Part D formularies and



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prescription drug event (PDE) reporting. These specialists play a crucial role in resolving rejected claims, facilitating prior authorizations, ensuring claims are accurate and that the prescribed medication is covered or substituted with a therapeutically equivalent alternative.

#### 4 | Smart Packaging Improves Compliance and Promotes Independence

LTC pharmacies provide several smart packaging options designed to enhance medication adherence and foster independence for PACE participants. And partnering with a single pharmacy provider results in standardized packaging, which facilitates staff's ability to reconcile medications during visits. Additionally, medication packaging sorted by administration time and consistently labeled reduces the risk of medication errors such as administering a medication twice or missing a dose inadvertently.

#### 5 | Technology to Enhance Coordination of Care

LTC pharmacies use cutting-edge integrated technologies to improve communication and coordination of care. These technologies include web-based pharmacy portals that offer real-time order tracking and on-demand access to clinical and financial reporting, HIPAA-secure text messaging, e-prescribing and advanced data analytics and insights. These tools improve operational efficiency, medication safety, and enable PACE organizations to manage costs more effectively. In addition, the 360-degree view of a participant's medications across prescribers helps LTC pharmacists optimize therapeutic regimens. By leveraging these technologies, LTC pharmacies and PACE organizations can work together to

streamline workflows and enhance overall coordination of care, leading to better clinical and operational outcomes.

#### 6 | A Partner in Improving Quality and Outcomes

A partnership with an LTC pharmacy that becomes an extension of the care team and integrates into the overall workflow optimizes medication management, leading to improved overall health outcomes and program compliance. With their expertise and resources, a pharmacy partner can serve as a valuable first line of defense in preventing medication errors and medication-related hospitalizations.

*A strong pharmacy partner can help improve medication adherence, promoting the highest level of independence for individuals with complex health care needs.*

LTC pharmacies employ nurses and pharmacists who streamline processes, simplify medication regimens and identify medication-related risks early. This proactive approach can reduce the risk of errors and other adverse medication events, which can lead to emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

Medical directors and other clinical team members can expect to receive valuable analytics that measure the clinical impact of their pharmacy's services. This includes gaining visibility into the clinical decisions and interventions the pharmacists make every day before dispensing medications to safeguard participants. Analyzing this data can help identify high-risk areas and improve overall care.

#### HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PHARMACY PARTNER

- Ensure there are service-level agreements for routine and emergency deliveries and 24/7 pharmacy accessibility
- Identify a pharmacy with established PBM partnerships and a proven track record of helping PACE organizations contain costs and remain compliant
- Verify that the pharmacy can provide integrated technologies to support e-prescribing and communicate electronically with care staff
- Expect a pharmacy partner to deliver robust data analytics and insights that can help drive clinical and financial outcomes
- Evaluate the pharmacy's ability to serve as a true partner and extension of the organization's care team

Choosing the right pharmacy partner is a crucial decision for PACE organizations. It can significantly impact the success of the organization and the wellbeing of its participants. By partnering with an LTC pharmacy, PACE organizations can leverage expertise, tools, and resources to optimize medication management, enhance care coordination, and streamline medication management processes.

A strong pharmacy partner can help improve medication adherence, promoting the highest level of independence for individuals with complex healthcare needs. They can also provide visibility and oversight with financial and clinical reporting, which can improve program compliance and quality outcomes. Ultimately, this leads to improved wellbeing and a better quality of life for participants.

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