

Promoting Adherence

Innovative Nurse Educator Program Boosts Retention by 40%

Challenge

The complexity of understanding and treating relapsing remitting MS led to low rates of patient adherence and persistency, and a negative patient view of organized support efforts.

Solution

Quintiles developed a comprehensive education, treatment and support strategy employing 48 nurse educators to conduct personalized phone assessments, therapy direction, in-home follow-up, and group support.

Results

The program boosted patient retention rates 40%, while yielding a 42% improvement in patient satisfaction and understanding of the importance of long-term therapy.

“These programs are vitally important in meaningfully supporting the patient, as well as contributing to the commercial health of the organization.”

— Quintiles’ Client, Director of Patient Services

The Complexity of MS Therapy

With five competing drugs available for treatment of relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis (MS), choice of therapy can be confusing for new patients and their caregivers.

After consulting with their physician and a choice of therapy selected, patients have to then understand the need to stay on therapy, even if they are asymptomatic or in remission.

Patient adherence and persistency can be challenging in this therapeutic area due to the complex nature of managing therapy. Prior to the initiation of this project, our partner exclusively utilized home health care agency nurses to provide patient trainings.

Home Care Challenges

Unfortunately, home health agency nurses in the U.S. do not specialize in MS, coverage is not always consistent, nurse turnover is high and information provided to patients can be too general.

In 2004, our customer, a leader in treatments for relapsing remitting MS, was seeking a means of helping patients better understand their diagnosis and then supporting them in appropriate administration, adherence and persistency.

Innovative Ally

The customer commissioned Quintiles to provide six nurse educators. Initially, the program was very much focused on the physician, with nurses describing the program and the benefits of having a professional explain to new patients how to take the therapy, the importance of staying on therapy and to answer patient concerns.

While there was a direct impact on practice education, it quickly became apparent that patient adherence was a more compelling concern. Program strategy changed, shifting focus from the physician to the patient.

In one of the longest running Quintiles HMS projects, nurse educators provide training on multiple sclerosis and therapy to new patients and their caregivers. One-year retention rates have improved by 40%, and the program is delivering important benefits in therapy adherence and patient satisfaction.

Expanding Education

Growing with the needs of the program, today Quintiles has 48 nurse educators working in partnership with our customer to provide an educational support service for patients and their caregivers, offering treatment information, ongoing treatment support, educational seminars, and a way to connect with others living with the disease.

With consent in place, nurse educators contact patients prescribed on therapy by phone for an initial assessment and then organize a home visit to provide MS education, to teach injection techniques and ways to incorporate MS treatment into the patient's daily routines. Follow-up phone calls are made after three days, and patients are revisited after two months and again after 11 months. At any time while patients are under therapy, nurses can revisit them should the patient have any concerns or side effects.

A Positive, Structured Approach

Another key element of the program is an initiative of highly structured educational groups managed by Quintiles nurse educators. "Feedback from traditional support groups suggest that patients find the process depressing, unhelpful and even stressful, hearing others describing their declining ability to function," says Susan Hundley, Director of Health Management Services (HMS) Nursing, Quintiles. "That's why we adopted a positive, structured approach. Over a 12-month period, we introduce 10 educational and empowering topics, such as how to tell friends and family about their condition and dealing with intimacy. This really helps patients to navigate through their disease and take control of their lives."

Additional support is provided by a nursing call center. In conjunction with the in-house call center staff, Quintiles nurse educators take inbound calls from patients and caregivers, as well as make outbound calls providing useful tips to achieve adherence.

Empowered by a Passionate Team

Valerie Metil, Senior Director, Medical, at Quintiles notes: "The team is extremely passionate about this program. For me, the most significant aspect about this project is how we go into homes, we talk to families and patients, give them hope and empower them. This is one of the longest running Quintiles health management projects we have ever performed. We started with six people and now have 48 nurse educators dedicated to helping patients. That is remarkable and speaks a lot about the success of the project for patients."

For our customer, the program provides a very powerful differentiator for both physicians and for patients. The program objective was to improve retention rates, and the latest figures show a remarkable 40% improvement. Also, patient surveys reveal very high levels of satisfaction, yielding more than a 42% improvement over home healthcare agency educators when asked whether the nurse had given a clear explanation of long-term therapy. As summed up by our client's Director of Patient Services, "These programs are vitally important in meaningfully supporting the patient, as well as contributing to the commercial health of the organization."

Contact us now to find out more about how Quintiles can make good things happen for you.

Contact Us:

On the web: www.quintiles.com

Email: patientcentric@quintiles.com

