



Medication Management – *The Future is Now*

America's senior citizens are living longer and more productive lives in their retirement years than ever before. Advancements in healthcare technology, therapeutic treatment and prescription medication continues to push life expectancy to new highs. According to a 2012 study from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, today's life expectancy for women is 81 years and men's is 76 years. The number of people age 90 and older almost tripled from 720,000 people in 1980 to 1.9 million in 2010. And the 90-plus population is expected to more than quadruple between 2010 and 2050.¹

Obviously, this is good news from a mortality perspective but it brings up many questions that seniors and their adult children must begin to contemplate as they plan for the future. And in millions of homes around the country, ***the future is now.***

This article will deal with one topic that is already a significant problem for seniors and their baby boomer children – and will continue to get worse if proper planning is not initiated – that is, medication management for chronic illnesses.

Among Americans age 60 and over, approximately 76% use two or more prescription drugs and 37% use five or more.² The longer we live, the more prevalence of chronic disease - which causes more prescription medication in order to control the disease process. The importance of taking prescription medication as prescribed cannot be overstated; however, the statistics show prescription non-compliance is rampant, costly and dangerous:

- **In a survey of 1,000 patients, nearly 75% admitted to not always taking their medication as directed.**³
- **Even among chronically ill patients who regularly fill their prescriptions, only about half the doses taken are taken as prescribed by their physician.**⁴
- **Poor medication compliance accounts for an alarming number of drug-related adverse events that result in hospital admissions.**⁵
- **Poor medication compliance is associated with up to 40% of nursing home admissions.**⁶
- **It is estimated that poor medication compliance costs the U.S. healthcare system over \$290 billion dollars per year.**⁷

The big question is "why"? Why do those with chronic illnesses not take their medication as prescribed? Let's put it this way - seniors may only spend a few hours per year in a doctor's office and spend the rest of their waking hours just living the rest of their lives. To a great extent, out of touch is out of mind. And if they are not monitored by healthcare professionals on a regular and consistent basis, they quietly slip off their medication regimens – intentionally or not – for several reasons:

- They forget. Most prescriptions today are electronic. The doctor electronically sends the prescription to the pharmacy and the patient forgets to get it filled because they didn't have a paper prescription to remind them.
- They can't afford the medication. They will not fill the prescription at all or they will take it every other day or cut the pill in half to make them last longer and stretch their dollars.
- Poor communication. Sometimes they just don't understand what they heard from their doctor. Even with instructions on the pill bottle, the communication link with their doctor didn't connect.

- They feel better so they stop taking their medication. They think there's no need to take the medication if they feel better or no longer have symptoms.
- Side Effects. They stop taking their medication because of perceived or real side effects.
- Poor eyesight. They can't read the label on the prescription so they compensate by self-medicating.
- Too confusing. Many seniors take multiple medications and sorting and organizing in the proper dosages, times and amounts is just too confusing.

So, what's the solution? It's called **chronic disease intervention and medication management**. This service is a must for seniors taking multiple medications, those trying to live independently with a chronic disease or for baby boomers / caregivers with aging parents. This service is done by telephone using a 'care team' of professionals, including a clinical pharmacologist to monitor, educate and serve as a "quarterback" overseeing the entire field of care. With multiple doctors prescribing multiple medications, all with different instructions, there needs to be one source that can manage the patient and see the entire playing field from a holistic standpoint. Today, too many seniors are left to their own devices to treat themselves, which as we have seen above, ultimately leads to a worsening of their medical condition, increased healthcare costs and perhaps, premature death.

There is no reason or excuse for seniors to have the burden of "managing" their own treatment regimens at a time in life when they're most vulnerable to error and forgetfulness. With **chronic disease intervention and medication management**, treatment protocols are followed more closely and medication compliance and adherence drastically improves, resulting in the patient getting better and staying better. And while technology is an integral part of this process, it's the "human touch" that makes the difference. A caring team of healthcare professionals are consistently monitoring and serving those that need the oversight and accountability that many lack today. The key is regular, consistent communication and education through a high-touch personalized service that builds upon a relationship of caring and trust.

As an added bonus, all prescription medication is sorted and pre-packaged for each patient so there's never a question about what medication to take and when to take it. Each patient receives a calendar shaped, pre-packaged kit – hand built specifically for each patient – and sent free of shipping charges each month or when needed. No more guessing about what medication to take when, no more missing refills and no more confusion. Each patient has a pharmacist dedicated to them who pre-packages medication for their assigned patients. And communication is a two-way street - patients, children of aging parents and caregivers have 24/7 access to their care team for questions, education and advise.

Problem solved. For more information on chronic disease intervention and medication management, go to ControlMyCare.info or call 877-582-2220. **The future is now.** The time to take action is today.

¹<http://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/articles/2011/11/28/life-after-age-90>

²U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics: Data Brief #42. September, 2010.

³Enhancing prescription medication adherence: a national action plan. National Council on Patient Information and Education. August, 2007.

⁴ibid

⁵Fischer MA, Stedman MR, Lii J, et al. Primary medication non-adherence: analysis of 195,930 electronic prescriptions. J Gen Intern Med. 2010; 25:284-290.

⁶Peterson Am, Takiya L, Finley R. Meta-analysis of trials of interventions to improve medication adherence. Am J Health Syst Pharm. 2003; 60:657-665.

⁷2010 benchmarks in improving medication adherence. Health Intelligence Network, 2010.