



# Patient Support Program

## Welcome Pharmacists...

We would like to introduce all our Pharmacists to the **Patient Support Program**. The Patient Support Program is a patient education and medication adherence program that was launched in 2005. The purpose of the program is to help patients stay on their drug therapy through several interventions during their course of therapy. These interventions come in the form of correspondence sent directly to the patients' home, as refill "reminder" letters. They also contain other pertinent healthcare information, which will assist patients in adhering to the therapy that their physician has prescribed.

This program has improved patient adherence by providing information to millions of patients about their medication and condition, and notifying them when they are overdue for their refills. It is also extremely successful and well received by patients, as evident by an opt-out rate of about one percent.

### The Communications

Adherence communications consist of several letters that are triggered by the refill due date of a prescription and come from the pharmacy where the prescription is filled. A pre-reminder letter arrives at the patients home a few days before their refill due date. A late reminder or "urgent" reminder is sent a few days after the refill due date, if no refill has been picked up. These letters contain educational information about the medication and the condition for which it is prescribed. They also remind patients about the importance of picking-up their medication on time. All communications give patients an option to opt-out of the program at any time, by calling **1-888-710-1771**. They also include information on the sponsors of the program.

### Patient Confidentiality

The adherence communications are designed to fall within the guidelines of such programs as recently described in the final HIPAA regulations. These adherence communications focus strictly on supporting the prescription as written by the physician. All letters include a patient confidentiality statement, such as: "To ensure your privacy, no information about you will be provided to the manufacturer or anyone else."

### Opting Out Patients

Patients can be removed from the Patient Support Program by calling the opt-out telephone number listed at the bottom of their letter. Follow the automated system instructions, which will direct you to enter the identification number, which is underlined and listed at the top of every letter, to the right of the patients name and address. Once a patient is opted out, it usually takes 72 hours to be deleted from all future Patient Support Program mailings.

### **Medications Currently in the Patient Support Program:**

Nexium      Zetia 2005

Abilify (awaiting data)      Vytorin (awaiting data)      Concerta (awaiting data)  
Effexor XR (awaiting data)      Nasonex (awaiting data)

### **Medications Soon to be Active in the Program:**

Advair      Avandia      Wellbutrin XL  
Avodart      Coreg

### **The Adherence Problem**

Did you know that non-adherence is a serious healthcare problem with severe therapeutic and economic ramifications? After just 9 months of drug therapy, on average only 50 percent of patients will remain on their chronic medication. Studies indicate that the problem of non-adherence costs over \$100 billion annually in the U.S. in additional healthcare spending and lost productivity.

### **The Adherence Solution**

Pharmacists supported by the **Patient Support Program** can improve patient adherence. The following tips can help impact your patient's medication-taking habits:

- Counsel patients on the impact of their drug therapy on their condition.
- Inform patients of drug-specific issues that may decrease adherence, for example, "it is common not to notice an improvement for 4-6 weeks."
- Attend CE programs that highlight adherence issues.
- On subsequent visits to the pharmacy, ask patients how their medication is working and provide encouragement.
- Although it sounds simple, let patients know their medication only works if they take it.
- Inform patients of the benefits of participating in the Patient Support Program.

If you have questions on this program please contact Rick Akers at 877.602.4179 ext 222.

**Patient Adherence .....Together, we can make a difference.**