Humana, Medicare Lead in Payer Performance

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n an assessment of performance by one of the nation's largest physician revenue management companies, Humana and Medicare were rated highest when it came to paying quickly and being easy to work with.

The performance data were tabulated and made public by AthenaHealth, a Watertown, Mass.-based company that manages \$2 billion in revenues for 7,000 physicians, nurses, and other health care providers in 33 states.

In explaining why the company decided to make the data available free of charge, Jeremy Delinsky, director of process innovation at AthenaHealth, said, "We were a little skittish about making it public, but we found the story was too compelling to sit on." And, physicians who know more about their insurers will have more leverage in contracting and a better opportunity to improve their bottom line, he said.

The company assessed 5 million "charge lines" worth of claims data from the fourth quarter of 2005. To be a part of the ranking, national payers had to have at least 10,000 "charge lines," or line items, and regional payers at least 3,000.

Insurers were ranked according to an overall index that gave the most weight to financial performance. That performance included days in accounts receivable, percentage of claims paid and closed on the first pass, and percentage of charges transferred to the patient.

In addition to financial performance, the index included an administrative measure encompassing the claims denial rate, the percentage requiring a phone call to clarify a response from the insurer, and the percentage of claims lost. Finally, a small amount of weight was given to the difficulty of working within the payer's rules.

Nationally, Humana ranked number one, followed by Medicare, United Health Group, Aetna, Cigna, Champus, and Wellpoint. According to AthenaHealth, Aetna denies claims twice as often as Humana, and the reasons are so unclear that 17% of claims need follow-up calls. Wellpoint tended to take the longest to pay, and more than any other payer, the company aggressively shifts responsibility to physicians to get payment from the patient.

For all payers, claims stay in accounts receivable for an average of 38 days.

On the regional level, there was a wide variation in performance.

In the northeast, for example, Blue-Cross BlueShield of Pennsylvania/Independence BlueCross was the top-ranked plan, followed by Tufts Health Plan and Fallon Health Plan. In the west, PacifiCare was first, followed by Medicare B in Texas and United Health Group. The largest regional payers mostly provided clear reasons for denials, rarely shifted the responsibility to physicians to secure payment, and paid most claims upon first submission and within 30 days.

Regional payers appeared to be more efficient and perhaps even more powerful than the national insurers, said Mr. Delinsky. National payers have been growing in size, but "it's unclear to us whether consolidation has resulted in the scale they hoped for," he said.

AthenaHealth did not assess payers' relative reimbursement rates because it would not be legal to publicize those rates, Mr. Delinsky said. However, he suggested that physicians could use his company's rankings to negotiate for a higher fee if the payer is hard to work with, or potentially accept a lower payment rate if the insurer pays more quickly and imposes less of an administrative burden.

The insurance industry did not respond directly to the rankings, but America's Health Insurance Plans, a national trade association, completed a study recently showing that 98% of claims submitted electronically are processed within a month of receipt. The study, based on aggregated data from 25 million claims processed by a sample of 26 health insurers, found that 75% of all claims are submitted electronically, up from 24% in 1995.

If there is a delay in payment, it's often because the claim has not been received in a timely manner from the physician's office, according to AHIP. The group said that 3 in 10 claims were received more than 30 days after the date of service. Paper claims are more likely to get held up. A third of paper claims took 60 days or more to reach the payer, said AHIP.

The rankings are posted at www.athenapayerview.com.

References: 1. Ambrosini PJ, Lopez FA, Chandler MC, et al. An open-label community assessment trial of ADDERALL XR in pediatric ADHD. Poster presented at: 155th Annual Meeting of the American Psych Association; May 22, 2002; Philadelphia, Pa. 2. Biederman J, Lopez FA, Boellner SW, Chandler MC. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled, parallel-group study of SL1381 (Adderall XR) in children attention-deficitlypperactivity disorder. Pediatrics. 2002;110:258-266. 3. McCracken JT, Biederman J, Greenhill LL, et al. Analog classroom assessment of a once-daily mixed amphetamine formulation, SL (ADDERALL XR), in children with ADHD. J Am Acad Child Adolecs Psychiatry. 2003;42:673-683. 4. Lopez FA, Ambrosini PJ, Chandler MC, et al. ADDERALL XR in pediatric ADHD: quality of life measures froi open-label community assessment trial. Poster presented at: 14th Annual CHADD International Conference; October 17, 2002; Miami Beach, Fla.

ADDERALL XR®

MISUSE OF AMPHETAMINE MAY CAUSE SUDDEN DEATH AND SERIOUS CARDIOVASCULAR ADVERSE EVENTS

* is indicated for the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

ADDERALL XR* in the treatment of ADHD was established on the basis of two controlled trials in children aged

notrolled trial in adolescents aged 13 to 17. and one controlled trial in adults who met DSM-IV* criteria for
tith extrapolation from the known efficacy of ADDERALL*, the immediate-release formulation of this substance.

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Characteristics Clinical experience suggests that, in psychotic patients, administration of phetamine may exacerbate symptoms of behavior disturbance and thought disorder.

In geriern Suppression of Growth: Data are inadequate to determine whether chronic use of mulants in children, including amphetamine, may be causally associated with suppression of Cowdow. Therefore, growth should be monitored during treatment, and patients who are not wing or gaining weight as expected should have their treatment interrupted.

Iden Death and Pre-existing Structural Cardiac Abnormalities: Sudden death has been orted in association with amphetamine treatment at usual doses in children with structural cardiac abnormalities. FOAUTIONS

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al: The least amount of amphetamine feasible should be prescribed or dispensed at one time in order to minimize the light of overdecage.

PRECAUTIONS
General: The least amount of amphetamine feasible should be prescribed or dispensed at one time in order to minimize the possibility of overdosage.
Hypertension: Caution is to be exercised in prescribing amphetamines for patients with even mild hypertension (see CONTRAINDICATIONS). Blood pressure and pulse should be monitored at appropriate intervals in patients taking ADDERALL XRe, especially patients with hypertension.
Sustained increases in blood pressure should be treated with dose reduction and/or appropriate medication.
Sustained increases in blood pressure should be treated with dose reduction and/or appropriate medication.
In a controlled 4-week outpatient clinical study of adolescents with ADHD, isolated systolic blood pressure elevations ≥15 mmHg were observed in 7/64 (11%) placebo-treated patients and 7/100 (7%) patients receiving ADDERALL XRe 10 oz 20, solated elevations in disatolic blood pressure ≥ 8 mmHg were observed in 16/64 (25%) placebo-treated patients and 22/100 (22%) ADDERALL XRe 10 oz 20 diseases, isolated increases in systolic blood pressure (above the upper 95% CI for age, gender and stature) were observed in 2/17 (12%) and 8/23 (35%), subjects administered 10 mg and 20 mg ADDERALL XRe, respectively, Higher single doses were associated with a greater increase in systolic blood pressure. All increases were transient, appeared maximal at 2 to 4 hours post dose and not associated with symptoms.

Ties: Amphetamines have been reported to exacerbate motor and phonic tics and Tourette's syndrome. Therefore, clinical evaluation for tics and Tourette's syndrome in children and their families should precede use of stimulant medications. Effects on Weight. Amphetamines have been associated with decreased appetite. Absolute weight increases in treated children over time, but the increases are smaller than expected based on DDC normative values. These reductions in expected based not DDC normative values. These reductions in expected on my ADDERALL XRe. Higher doses were associated with

Information for Patients: Ampletamines may impair the ability of the patient to engage in potentially hazardous activities such as operating machinery or vehicles, the patient should theretion be cautioned accordingly.

Southle add etc.) lower absorption of amphetamines. Infrary activiting agents: Cartery agents (amonomism of the longitude) agents (patient) agents. Cartery of the amphetamine molecule, thereby increasing urinary excretion. Both groups of agents lower blood levels and efficiacy of amphetamines. Addrengic blockers—Addrenergic blockers—

| Body System | Preferred Term | ADDERALL XR® (n=374) | Placebo (n=210) |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| General | Abdominal Pain (stomachache) Accidental Injury Asthenia (fatique) | 14% 3% 2% | 10% 2% 0% |
| | Fever Infection Viral Infection | 5% 4% 2% | 2% 2% 0% |
| Digestive System | Loss of Appetite Diarrhea Dyspepsia Nausea Vomiting | 22% 2% 2% 5% 7% | 2% 1% 1% 3% 4% |
| Nervous System | Dizziness Emotional Lability Insomnia Nervousness | 2% 9% 17% 6% | 0% 2% 2% 2% |
| Metabolic/Nutritional | Weight Loss | 4% | 0% |

Table 2 Adverse Events Reported by 5% or more of Adolescents Weighing ≤ 75 kg/165 lbs Receiving ADDERALL XR° with Higher Incidence Than Placebo in a 287 Patient Clinical Forced Weekly-Doce Titration Study*

| Body System | Preferred Term | ADDERALL XR® (n=233) | Placebo (n=54) |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| General | Abdominal Pain (stomachache) | 11% | 2% |
| Digestive System | Loss of Appetite b | 36% | 2% |
| Nervous System | Insomnia ^b Nervousness | 12% 6% | 4% 6%ª |
| Metabolic/Nutritional | Weight Loss b | 9% | 0% |

of adverse events Illowing events did not meet the criterion for inclusion in Table 2 but were reported by 2% to 4% of adolescen eiving ADDERALL XR with a higher incidence than patients receiving placebo in this study: accidental injury lique), dry mouth, dyspensia, emotional lability, nausea, somnolence, and vomith, dyspensia, emotional lability, nausea, somnolence, and vomithe.

| Body System | Preferred Term | ADDERALL XR® (n=191) | Placebo (n=64) |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| General | Asthenia Headache | 6% 26% | 5% 13% |
| Digestive System | Loss of Appetite Diarrhea Dry Mouth Nausea | 33% 6% 35% 8% | 3% 0% 5% 3% |
| Nervous System | Agitation Anxiety Dizziness Insomnia | 8% 8% 7% 27% | 5% 5% 0% 13% |
| Cardiovascular System | Tachycardia | 6% | 3% |
| Metabolic/Nutritional | Weight Loss | 11% | 0% |
| Urogenital System | Urinary Tract Infection | 5% | 0% |

psychosis, often clinically indistinguishable from schizophrenia.

OVERDOSAE*
Individual patient response to amphetamines varies widely. Toxic symptoms may occur idiosyncatically at low doses.

Symptoms: Manifestations of acute overdosage with amphetamines include restlessness, tremor, hyperrellexia, rapid respiration, confusion, assaultiveness, hallucinations, panic states, hyperpyrexia and rhabdomyolysis Fatigue and depression usually follow the central nervous system stimulation. Cardiovascular effects include arrhythmias, hypertension or hypotension and circulatory collapse. Bastrointestinal symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Fatal poisoning is usually preceded by convulsions and corns.

Treatment:Consult with a Certified Poison Control Center for up to date quidance and advice. Management of acute amphetamine intoxication is argely symptomatic and includes gastric lavage, administration of activated charcoal, administration of a cathartic and sedation. Experience with hemodialysis or pertineal dialysis is inadequate to permit recommendation in this regard. Acidification of the urine increases amphetamine excretion, but its believed to increase risk of acute renal fallure impolibrium as present. If acute severe hypertension complicates amphetamine overdosage, administration of intravenous phentolamine has been achieved. Chlorpromazine antagonizes the central stimulant effects of amphetamines and can be used to treat amphetamine intoxication. The prolonged release of mixed amphetamines sist from ADDEFALL XFF should be considered when treating patients work of the considered when treating patients work of the