

New Study Measures Effects of Medicare Part D on Prescription Drug Use, Cost Sharing for Senior Beneficiaries

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Healthcare Editors/Government Writers

BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--February 13, 2009--Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), Harvard Medical School, and Adheris, Inc., an inVentiv Health company, announce today a new study highlighting the effects of Medicare Part D coverage on the use of selected essential drugs and out-of-pocket spending among seniors without prior drug coverage.

Study investigators found that although the implementation of the Medicare Part D benefit was associated with a sizable initial reduction in out-of-pocket drug spending and a meaningful increase in the use of selected essential medications, the benefit was not evenly distributed throughout the year. Many patients reached the coverage gap (or "doughnut hole") before the year's end, resulting in significantly reduced pharmacy dispensing of previously used essential medications.

Seniors with sufficient prescription drug use to have reached the Medicare Part D coverage gap were the focus in this analysis of 114,766 patients, using time-trend analyses of dispensing data from three large pharmacy chains. Of this total, 7,325 (11.7 %) met study criteria for reaching the coverage gap by December 2006, roughly a year after the implementation of Medicare Part D. And of the 11.7%, 196 patients reached a catastrophic coverage level.

The researchers found that among previously uninsured seniors, drug use increased from 3% to 37%, and out-of-pocket spending decreased between 37% to 58% percent from 2005 data with results varying by drug class. At the same time, pharmacy dispensing of the previously used essential medications was significantly reduced once patients reached the coverage gap. Although the coverage gap may have been a necessary element in the Part D legislation to allow for the bill's passage, these results suggest that it reduced gains in access to prescription drugs in this study setting.

An abstract of the study, published online by Health Affairs, can be found at <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/abstract/hlthaff.28.2.w305>.

About the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics, Brigham and Women's Hospital

The Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics of the Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) and Harvard Medical School is a leading research institution that focuses on the evaluation of drug reimbursement changes, comparative drug effectiveness and safety research and medication adherence research. BWH is a 747-bed tertiary care hospital and committed to excellence in patient care with expertise in virtually every specialty of medicine and surgery. Through investigation and discovery conducted at its Biomedical Research Institute (BRI), BWH is an international leader in basic, clinical and translational research on human diseases, involving more than 860 physician-investigators and renowned biomedical scientists and faculty supported by more than \$416 M in funding. For more information about BWH, please visit www.brighamandwomens.org.

About Adheris, Inc.

An inVentiv Health (NASDAQ: VTIV) company, Adheris Inc., provides direct-to-patient, pharmacy-based programs that provide valuable medication education and timely refill reminders. Adheris programs are HIPAA-compliant and specifically support the physician's treatment choice by underscoring information that can enhance patient health. The Adheris pharmacy network includes more than 20,000 pharmacies, accounting for more than 45% of all retail prescriptions. For more information, visit www.adheris.com.

Adheris, Inc.

Laleh Varasteh, 781-425-6665

Laleh.varasteh@adheris.com

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