

**Title:** Collaboration Between Rheumatology Clinic and Specialty Pharmacy to Positively Impact Patient Experience and Hospital Stewardship

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**Introduction:**

Biologic medications are commonly utilized to treat pediatric rheumatic diseases. Being high-cost, most third-party payors require dispensing through a specialty pharmacy. Common challenges with this system include delayed or missed medication shipment, adult-trained clinicians, and difficulty communicating with representatives. In March 2015, Children’s Mercy opened their own specialty pharmacy, available to a certain subset of patients based on insurance coverage. The Rheumatology Clinic at Children’s Mercy aims to improve medication delivery timeliness, patient satisfaction, and hospital stewardship via collaboration with the Children’s Mercy Hospital Specialty Pharmacy (CMH SP) when appropriate and applicable.

**Methods:**

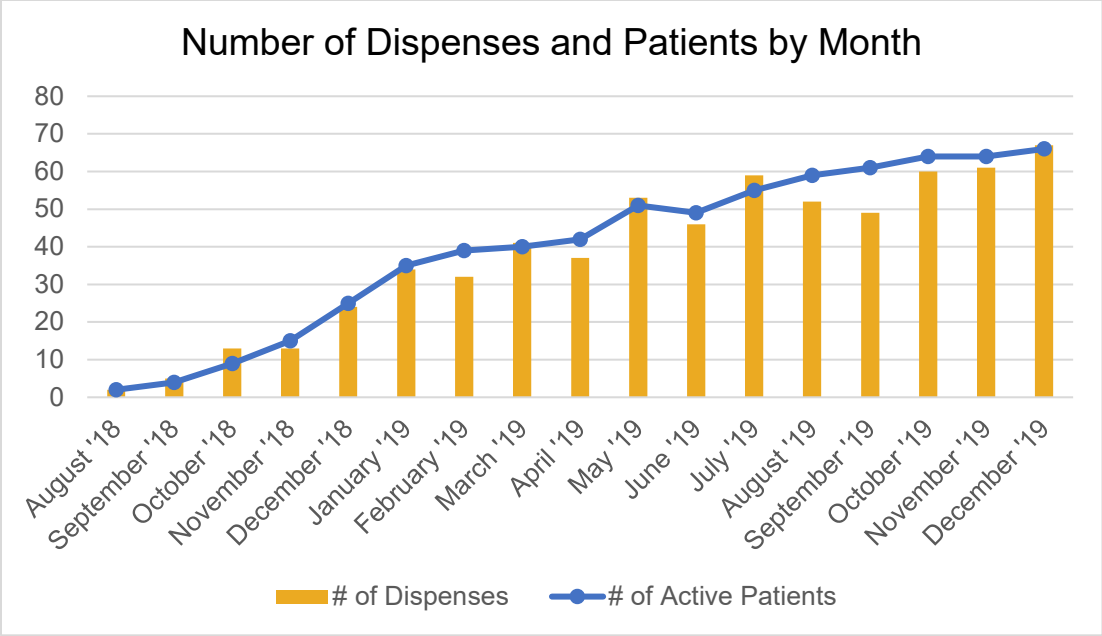
Throughout the last year, the rheumatology team increased utilization of CMH SP through a multidisciplinary approach. The office manager identified potential patients and communicated with the CMH SP pharmacist to gauge eligibility. Providers were notified of eligible patients and discussed CMH SP in clinic with families when appropriate. Providers and/or nursing staff communicated with the CMH SP pharmacist to verify eligibility and expedite processing. The CMH SP pharmacist initiated the prior authorization process and contacted family to enroll the patient in their program. Surveys were distributed by the CMH SP to analyze patient and family satisfaction and collect feedback.

**Results:**

From August 2018 to December 2019, the number of patients utilizing CMH SP increased from 2 to 66. On average, 13.6 days elapse between the day the order is placed and when the medication is dispensed, compared to a national average of 3-6 weeks. When 59 families were asked if their medications were delivered on time, 98.3% answered “yes, definitely”. All families who had previously attempted to call CMH SP answered positively when asked if it was easy to contact someone if they had questions, with 96.4% saying “yes, definitely”. In rating their specialty pharmacy experience, (0-10), 96.6% selected 10, and 3.4% selected 9. The annualized new net revenue projected to be generated by rheumatology patients utilizing CMH SP in fiscal year 2020 is over \$700,000.

**Discussion:**

The number of patients benefited by the superior service of CMH SP has risen steadily over the last year, leading to high patient satisfaction and financial benefits for the hospital. The rheumatology team plans to continue this initiative by actively working as a multidisciplinary team to identify eligible patients. Future goals include having CMH SP recognized by other third-party payors, enabling more families to qualify for this service and receive the timely, patient-focused care.



**References:**

2018-19 Economic Report on Pharmaceutical Wholesalers and Specialty Distributors. Adam J. Fein, Ph.D. Drug Channels Institute - October 2018.