

CASE STUDY

InMedRx Helps Correctional Institutions Reduce Pharmacy Spending with Innovative Release and Re-entry Medication Programs

Making healthcare transitions easier and more cost-effective.



William P. Kissel,
MS, CCHP/MP
Senior Vice President of
Jail Operations
~ Correct Care Solutions (CCS)



PRIMARY INTENDED OUTCOME

Incarcerated adults have higher than average rates for many health-related issues including asthma, arthritis, diabetes, mental illness, high cholesterol, HIV, hepatitis C, and hypertension, according to a 2017 report by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Departments of Corrections are legally required to provide medical treatment to people in their custody, including necessary pharmaceuticals.

When individuals are released from incarceration, or when they participate in re-entry programs, the National Commission on Correctional Healthcare requires that patients' health needs be met during their transition back into the community.

The InMedRx prescription voucher system provides re-entry participants and newly released individuals with timely and convenient access to the medications they require to manage their health conditions. InMedRx offers a network of more than 70,000 pharmacies with hours and locations that can serve patients anywhere in the nation at any hour of the day.

THE CHALLENGE

The transition from jail or prison back into the community can be complicated. For individuals participating in re-entry programs, housing and employment are typically arranged, but the overarching goal of the program is to simulate life back in a community while providing monitoring and support.

Compassionate and cost-effective post-release discharge planning for people ending incarceration is an industry-wide challenge, according to William P. Kissel, MS, CCHP/MP, Senior Vice President of Correct Care Solutions (CCS) Jail Operations, headquartered in Nashville. CCS provides medical and behavioral health services for thousands of patients in hospitals as well as local, state, and federal correctional facilities.

CASE STUDY

“*Compassionate and cost-effective post-release discharge planning for people ending incarceration is an industry-wide challenge.*”

William P. Kissel, MS, CCHP/MP
Senior Vice President of Jail Operations
~ Correct Care Solutions (CCS)

Learning to manage health conditions upon release includes finding a doctor and having prescriptions filled. InMedRx supports re-entry programs by providing a pharmacy voucher system and a comprehensive pharmacy network for participating patients to use. “Ideally, we want to make sure that we have a system in place where patients who are discharging from our facilities have timely access to their medications when they get out,” Kissel said.

The average length of stay in a jail is around 20 days; individuals may be released at any hour and often without much advance notice. This lack of scheduling makes it difficult for the institutional healthcare provider to be prepared for a patient’s departure, including release medications.

When people are released, simply having a prescription or medication bottle in hand may not be enough to guarantee that patients will adhere to a treatment plan. CCS pays for release drugs as part of their agreement with the facilities they serve, and noncompliance is costly. Compliance is crucial, not only to save healthcare dollars and ensure patients maintain their health status post-release, but also to prevent abandoned prescription drugs from becoming hazardous.

“I have seen drugs discarded on the ground outside of jails,” Kissel said. “These medications can be a real safety issue – who knows who might find them?”

THE DECISION

Chronic conditions that are identified and managed successfully in jail should, ideally, be maintained upon release whether under Medicaid or another community provider. “We diagnose a lot of chronic disease when patients come to us,” Kissel said. “Our goal is to identify pathologies early and improve the patient’s health status, which saves money in the long term. Correctional healthcare is a model of how a proactive and preventive system should work.”

CCS had already contracted with InMedRx to help patients maintain their health when Kissel joined the company 5 years ago. They are now working to implement the release medication voucher system across the facilities they serve. “Our pharmacy director had previous experience with InMedRx,” he said. “We have had nothing but positive results from them, and I don’t need to shop for another company.”

THE RESULTS

According to Kissel, a perfect jail release medication system would look like this: “An individual gets ready for release, discharge planners have an appointment set up for them with a community provider, and a prescription is in place through InMedRx, which bridges the patient between discharge and that first medical appointment.”

CASE STUDY

InMedRx Reduces Pharmacy Spending and Medication Waste

UP TO 30%
Reductions in Costs

ENHANCED
Patient Compliance

IMPROVED
Staff Productivity

Unfortunately, the time between discharge and seeing a community provider can be lengthy, particularly for behavioral health issues. Within an imperfect system, however, InMedRx offers advantages. Most release prescriptions cover 7 to 10 days of medication. In some cases, certain medications provided via InMedRx may be covered for 30 days with 1 or 2 refills.

Because all major chains and most independent pharmacies participate in the InMedRx program, it is easy for patients to locate a pharmacy wherever they are upon release. "With InMedRx, we can make sure pharmacy options are on common bus lines," Kissel said. "And there are 24-hour pharmacies on the list as well, which is important, because people are released [from jail] at all times of day. Patients choose the one best for them."

Data from CCS facilities using InMedRx show prescription pick-up rates ranging from 15% to 50%. While CCS and InMedRx would like to see higher rates of compliance, a benefit of the system is that CCS is no longer paying for prescriptions that were previously abandoned. According to InMedRx, they have been able to help correctional clients decrease the cost of release medication programs by as much as 30 percent, while also facilitating a smoother return to the community for patients.

THE CONCLUSION

A seamless healthcare transition with good continuity of care can save taxpayer dollars, improve quality of life, and may even reduce recidivism. "If an individual is hooked up to a primary care provider or pharmacist, we can manage chronic illness and reduce hospitalizations resulting from emergencies," Kissel said. "It's a good investment."

A patient who willingly visits a pharmacy post-release to fill a prescription is much more likely to take that drug as prescribed. This approach prevents wasted medications and keeps prescription drugs out of the wrong hands. "It also connects that newly released person with a pharmacist in their community," Kissel said, providing an important opportunity for them to develop a healthcare relationship they may never have had previously.

Correctional healthcare providers are working every day to improve continuity of care for patients before and after release. InMedRx offers a step in the right direction by connecting patients in a timely and accessible way with the medications they need once they have transitioned out of jail.

"They provide a very bright solution to address an industry problem," Kissel said. "Using InMedRx makes better business sense, but it also makes better patient sense."