

COVID-19's Impact on Respiratory Brands

The current public health pandemic is impacting healthcare stakeholders from doctors and nurses in the frontlines to payers and PBMs. EVERSANA™ is monitoring the constant changes to access and benefit consideration, tracking payer responses and key trends that may impact respiratory brands.

According to a recent research released by Health Strategies Insights by EVERSANA™, the management of asthma, COPD, and other respiratory conditions is a high priority in the era of COVID-19 with less life-threatening chronic conditions such as autoimmune diseases taking the back seat for now.

Physicians are using a variety of asthma and COPD products to treat COVID-19 patients, placing a strain on supply. Most respiratory patients have access to their medications they need at this moment; however, physicians expect to switch some patients to alternative products within the same class to ensure treatment continuity.

“The day-to-day attention is on COVID-19 and anything related to it, like infections, bacterial infections, pneumonia, etc. Overall maintenance type disease states have become secondary, partially due to limited resources, and government restrictions

– Health System Pharmacy”

How Can Biopharmaceutical Companies Help?



Assist providers in identifying high-risk respiratory patients for additional monitoring and support.



Help respiratory patients find alternative sources for their medications when their pharmacy is out of stock or assist patients in securing home delivery of their drugs.



Set up a hotline to report product distribution issues and then work with pharmacies, wholesalers, specialty pharmacies, etc. on both short-term and long-term solutions that ensure adequate supply.

Source: Health Strategies Insights by EVERSANA, Brand Access, Marketplace Dynamics - Respiratory, May 2020.

In the effort to support continuity of care to patients on office-administered therapies, health plans have taken numerous measures to ensure seamless benefit consideration and approval management during the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts typically include supporting physicians in providing safe and seamless administration of office-administered therapies within their office by lessening tedious administrative tasks (e.g., prior authorizations, reauthorizations etc.)

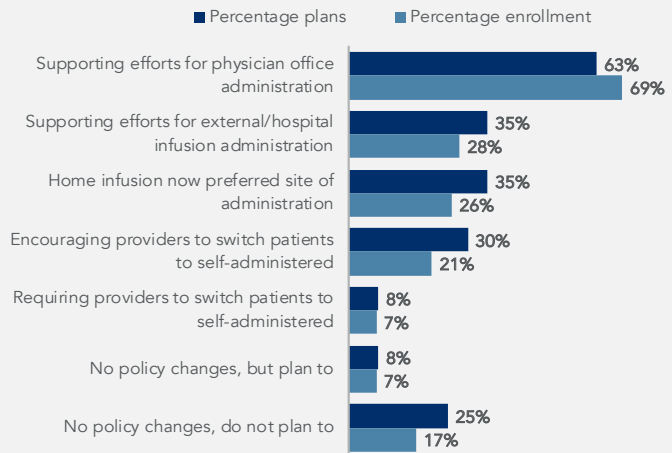
Plans are slightly more likely to support efforts for office-administration of asthma biologics than certain other OA categories such as oncology, potentially because they feel the oncology patient is more vulnerable and/or may believe that a quick asthma injection/monitoring creates limited exposure.

However, a quarter of plans have not made any changes to office-administered asthma biologic policies, and do not anticipate doing so, leaving all safety and management policies in the hands of the providers.

Overall, COVID-19 has had limited impact on payer contracting discussions with biopharmaceutical companies. After the initial shift in business practices, payers have continued with “business as usual,” but virtually.

While many payers will eventually go back to some face-to-face meetings, many will continue to meet virtually with biopharmaceutical companies. This makes it increasingly important that contracting discussions, supporting materials, and overall logistics are supportive of this avenue.

Plan Action to Support Asthma Patients on Office-Administered Biologics During COVID-19
 (Percentage plans)



N=40 health plans. Source: Health Strategies Insights by EVERSANA, Multiple Sclerosis Brand Access Marketplace Dynamics, June 2020.

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I don't think it's had any impact as far as these big categories we review on an annual basis. Our RFPs go out three months before they're due, a month before our review. We're still able to conduct business either over WebEx or telephonically.

– Pharmacy Regional Independent

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No dramatic delays to reviews or contracting discussions. We used to have a lot of in-person meetings, which are now being replaced by teleconferences and WebEx.

– Blues Medical”

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I think (future) face-to-face meetings will be the exception versus the rule.

– Blues Medical”

Companies offering performance-based rebate contracting should incorporate anticipated additional utilization due to COVID-19 into their expected volume of respiratory products when developing contract terms.

To learn more about Health Strategies Insights by EVERSANA™, visit eversana.com/products/health-strategies-insights.



About EVERSANA™

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