

How Will the Affordable Care Act Impact Rx Savings Programs?

Q&A with Jennifer McGovern, AstraZeneca Director of Patient Assistance Programs

Q: What prescription savings programs are currently offered by AstraZeneca?

Jennifer: AstraZeneca has three patient assistance programs – they all come under the umbrella of AZ&Me Prescription Savings Programs. We have a program for people without insurance, so it's only for people who don't have insurance. We also have a program for people with Medicare Part D, and those are people that have that coverage, but they're still having trouble affording their medications. And then we have a program for healthcare facilities where we work with free clinics, community health centers, disproportionate share hospitals, charitable pharmacies - and we provide medications in bulk to them that they dispense directly to eligible patients.

Q: Big changes are coming to the U.S. health system as part of the Affordable Care Act. How will this impact AstraZeneca's prescription savings programs?

Jennifer: There's so much that we still don't know about the impact of the Affordable Care Act. For the programs that are part of the AZ&Me Prescription Savings Programs, we're not looking to change any of the criteria or processes for the programs in 2014. We really want to see how the exchanges are working for people, see if people are coming into the exchanges as anticipated.

We also know that with Medicaid expansion, some states are choosing at this time not to expand. So what we estimate is that there are going to be a number of people that are going to continue to need help as we go forward. And we also know that the process for people joining exchanges or getting into Medicaid is going to be a gradual process over time. So we anticipate that while volumes in our programs may begin to decrease, there is still going to be a need for these programs and people are still going to be coming to us when they have no other alternative.

Q: With changes arising from the Affordable Care Act, it is anticipated that the coverage gap – or the “donut hole” – will be smaller in the Medicare prescription drug program. How will this impact AstraZeneca's prescription savings program for people with Medicare Part D?

Jennifer: In our Medicare Part D program, AstraZeneca medicines are provided at no cost to qualifying individuals enrolled in Medicare Part D and who have an annual income at or below \$35,000 for an individual or \$48,000 for a couple. The program is not a “coverage gap” program. It is a program designed to help people who are on Medicare Part D who are still having trouble affording their AstraZeneca medicines, and it is available to eligible patients regardless of where they may be in relation to the Medicare Part D coverage gap.

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While the Affordable Care Act should help more Medicare Part D patients better manage affording their prescriptions, there will still be Medicare Part D patients who will continue to need our help affording their AstraZeneca medicines.

Q: Given the changes to the law, did AstraZeneca consider doing away with its prescription savings programs?

Jennifer: No. Even with the Affordable Care Act, some patients will still need support in paying for their AstraZeneca prescription medicines. We understand our medicines do not do patients any good if they are unable to afford them, and we believe these programs are the right thing to do.

Q: Will you be making adjustments to the programs based on how the law changes the market?

Jennifer: It is possible that in the future we will be making adjustments to the programs based on how the law impacts access. However, we still are not clear on what those changes might be, and we are not planning on making any changes to the programs criteria or processes for 2014.

Making changes to the program based on changes in law is not new. For example, the Medicare Part D portion of our program was created after it became clear that some seniors enrolled in Medicare Part D still needed help affording their AstraZeneca medicines.

Last year, we [broadened the income eligibility](#) to help more people qualify for the programs. We also changed the documentation required for patients applying for assistance, making it easier for people who recently lost their jobs or experienced other life changes to apply for our programs. We understood for example, that if someone became unemployed their financial documentation might not reflect this change. That is one of the reasons we developed Change in Circumstances criteria – we knew we needed to be flexible so as to help patients in situations like these.

Q: Finally, how can patients apply for or learn more about the AZ&Me Prescription Savings Programs?

Jennifer: People who are interested in our Patient Assistance Programs can call 1-800-AzandMe (292-6363) and they can also visit our website at www.azandme.com for more information.

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