

New Program Teaches Patients to Drug-Seek More Cost-Effectively

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) under a new Congressional mandate to design programs to cut costs and reduce patient harm, has initiated a nationwide outreach program to radically improve drug-seeking behavior.

“We have been seeing too many drug-seekers that, despite years of experience in their field, lack a sufficiently-nuanced approach, and so are getting exposed to many needless, costly and potentially dangerous diagnostic studies and treatments,” Dr. Vinnie Gambino of CMS explained. “If we can get them to [refine their presentations](#), then we can really enhance the drug-seeking process, save a lot of tax dollars and improve patient care.”

“I think this is going to be a real win-win-win for patients, health professionals, and insurers, as well as hospitals dealing with uninsured patients,” explained Dr. Maria Corleone, whose groundbreaking research in streamlining pain management inspired the project.

Re-Education

“By re-educating patients to stick to preferred diagnoses with limited demonstrable physical, laboratory or radiological findings, such as fibromyalgia, reflex sympathetic dystrophy and idiopathic peripheral neuropathy.”

Avoid extraneous details that might warrant imaging or labs, like new neurological findings. “We find that we can get these patients in and out of emergency departments efficiently with these simple guidelines.”

Initial pilot studies have been extremely successful. We find that patients are adept at learning these enhanced drug-seeking techniques and [spreading them to the community](#).

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that reaching even 50% of drug-seekers the savings nationally could reach into the tens of billions. Further, the estimated reduction in costs down the road from reducing cancer from

unnecessary CT scans is substantial.

“Our YouTube Channel, Drug-Seeking Made Easy, has gone totally viral!” explained Dr. Sofia LaRocca, the program’s head of outreach. “Most drug-seekers of course know which allergies to list, such as Toradol, but they often made classic errors that would get them a CT or other test. Our program has been able to teach people to avoid that sort of unnecessary unnecessary testing and get right to the details that tend to compel providers to write the desired prescriptions.”

Behavioral and Communication Issues

“We have also been working on behavioral and communication issues,” says assistant program director Dr. Leo Lanza. “Many drug-seekers have gotten into the habit of assuming that a strategy involving belligerence would get them more opiates, but our studies have proven that a [friendly attitude gets the biggest scripts](#). We believe this will help avoid provider burnout, particularly in emergency departments that have higher percentages of drug-seeking patients.”

The program intends to focus primarily on opiate-seekers in 2016, with ambitious plans to expand to reach benzodiazepine-seekers in 2017.