

## DISEASE MANAGEMENT

# Projects that improve health outcomes while delivering savings

As medical science advances, people are living longer, healthier lives. These improvements have been accompanied by a steady increase in provincial health care budgets. The challenge for governments is to find a way to reap the most benefit from new technology while still balancing their budgets.

The most commonly used solution is to ration care. Provincial governments have steadily reduced the rate at which new medicines are added to public drug plans. This approach fails to take full advantage of opportunities for new medicines to save money elsewhere in the system.

New advances in prescription medicines have created treatments for conditions that once required surgeries or were even deemed incurable – thereby keeping people out of hospital. But there is more to good health than simply receiving the right medicine. The right follow-up can maximize the benefit and reduce hospital time.

A patient who has more information about his or her condition and medication is more likely to experience a successful recovery. With information comes the power to make the right choices around diet, exercise, lifestyle and other factors that can ensure the best possible result. A well-informed patient is more likely to use the medicine properly and less likely to join the number of patients that leave a treatment regime prematurely, essentially wasting the health care system's investment in them. As well, monitoring around dosage levels can help ensure that the patient is taking the right amount of medicine and not wasting pills.

This is where disease management comes in. These projects take on a wide range of functions from professional education seminars to patient information campaigns to individual programs for patients. They address the problems that have left a gap in care: undiagnosed patients, inappropriate prescribing, poor patient adherence and restrictive policies that stand between a patient and the right medicine.

Research, education programs, patient counselling, support for families and access to the best new medicines are all components of disease management. In short, this represents a better integrated form of care.

For example, AstraZeneca supports 11 clinics and projects across Canada for patients with Congestive Heart Failure. Following a disease management approach, patients are provided individualized diet and exercise programs as well as stress management

counselling to reduce those hospital stays. These programs are reducing hospital stays for patients that had been typically rehospitalized four times a year for 11 days, on average.

Other disease management programs focus on research into patient outcomes, establishing best practices and determining which treatment regimes can give patients the most opportunity for success.

With strong financial support from research-based pharmaceutical companies, Quebec's government made a substantial commitment to drug optimization programs. It is leading a partnership that brings the pharmaceutical industry, academics and health care professionals together to design a variety of drug optimization programs, including educational campaigns for both patients and health care professionals. In particular, AstraZeneca and other providers of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), a class of gastrointestinal drugs, are funding programs to ensure that this type of medicine is used properly. AstraZeneca is proposing to provincial governments that disease management programs in this class have more potential to reduce overall health costs than measures that steer patients towards lower-cost, lower-efficacy treatments. We believe patients should be given access to the best new medicines and we are willing to fund disease management programs that measure patient success with PPIs at different dosage levels. This will address concerns that some patients are taking larger-than-necessary doses, helping governments to reduce the demand for drugs.

Disease management offers greater potential for long-term savings to the overall health care system than measures that address the drug program budget in isolation by rationing access to medicines. With increased access to the best new medicines and to disease management programs, governments and pharmaceutical companies can build a partnership that will find new health care savings by keeping people out of doctors' offices and emergency rooms.

The combination of expanded education programs, benchmarked best practices and individualized regimes will give health care professionals and patients the tools they need to improve health outcomes.

### **AstraZeneca's Position**

**AstraZeneca believes that disease management programs have enormous potential to make sure that patients get the maximum benefit from their treatments. Government health care budgets can be reduced as these programs help to reduce hospital stays and waste created by inappropriate uses of medications. Unlike the blunt cost-cutting approaches that address only the drug program line in a government budget, disease management programs can improve health outcomes while actually reducing hospital costs and the overall health care budget. AstraZeneca is a leader in this emerging field, working to design and fund innovative disease management programs.**