

## Background and Significance

### Cancer Prevalence & Treatment

- Cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death in the US causing 600,000 deaths annually
- While traditional treatment for cancer was infusion chemotherapy, there are more targeted oral therapies allowing for more precise treatment
- These newer oral oncology treatments must be secured from specialty pharmacies

### Specialty Pharmacies

- Specialty medications are the fastest growing segment of the pharmaceutical industry and have dominated drug development for the past decade
- Specialty pharmacies typically dispense medications that are expensive, may require specific handling and preparation and are for complex disease states such as cancer

## Objective

- Seek to better understand how the shift to specialty pharmacies has impacted patient care by identifying challenges in securing medication and explore how the process can potentially be improved

## Methodology

- Conducted literature review
- Selected oncology practice and met with nurse manager
- Drafted questions and conducted interviews
- Reviewed interview results
- Based on results identified process gap

## Interview Topics

- Nurses' experience level
- Percent of patients on oral oncology medications
- Process for securing oral oncology medications
- Involvement in the process
- Challenges with the process
- Causes of delay in medication getting to patient
- What would make the process easier

## Key Interview Responses

"It used to be that any one of the nurses in the practice could be asked to send in a prescription. About two years ago I [Nurse Manager] took over the responsibility for obtaining oral oncology medications."

"If we are not going to dispense, many times due to the patient's insurance, I will then either fax or ecribe the prescription that will be filling."

"More than 60% of our patients are on oral oncology medications."

"There can be a delay because a PA is required."

"Getting funding for copays can delay the process."

"There can be a delay because the pharmacy is unable to reach the patient to set up shipment."

"There is no real training for a new nurse. It would be learning as you go."

"There is no guidebook or manual - new nurse would learn by asking the nurse manager or other nurses."

## Barriers identified in Peer Reviewed Literature

### Process Barriers Included

- Insurance mandate to a particular specialty pharmacy
- Specialty Pharmacy's lack of access to medication
- Insurance processing requirements such as PAs
- High out-of-pocket costs

## Discussion

- The interviews revealed challenges obtaining oral oncology medications like those identified in the Peer Reviewed Literature
- Gap identified – there was no training or manual on the process – this became the deliverable

## Limitations

- Small sample size
- Not an academic medical center clinic

## Conclusions

- There are many challenges in securing oral oncology medications for patients
- It would be helpful for nurses to have a manual in order to provide a systematic approach – this was developed

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