



For Healthcare Professionals

- **Educate.** Tell patients what to expect and prepare them for all possible outcomes. If a patient starts feeling better, they might think the drug is no longer needed. If they feel worse, the patient could discontinue therapy to avoid side effects. If the patient experiences no change whatsoever, they may conclude that the drug isn't working. Ask whether someone can help with the patient's medication schedule. Patients with assistance have better medication adherence.
- **Nurture.** Incorporate motivational interviewing and develop criteria to help assess the potential for non-adherence. This is as easy as taking time to speak with and establish a relationship with every patient who walks through the door. Ask patients how they are feeling, if a new dosage is working better, or if they are experiencing any new side effects. Be receptive to the patient and their concerns about any challenges they face around taking their medications. After reviewing an in-take assessment, offer personalized solutions and acknowledge any successes. Improved communication can help lead to behavioral change and improved adherence and a better chance that they will keep their follow-up appointments.
- **Be a team.** Advocate for a patient-centered healthcare team. Improved communication can help lead to behavioral change, improved adherence and a better chance that the patient will keep their follow-up appointments. The prescriber should establish communication channels with the pharmacist as well as with their patients. Giving patients a sense of belonging to a team that regularly communicates about their care can help improve patient outcomes. Review the medications and schedule with your patient to make sure they have a good understanding of their drug therapy regimen.
- **Synchronize schedules and eliminate unnecessary or redundant medications.** Coordinate as many medication refills for patients to pick up at the same time and at the same pharmacy to ensure against lack of interruption in therapies with fewer trips to the pharmacy. Coordinate the medication refills with the patient's other medical specialists if necessary. Is it easier for the patient to pick up their medicine; do they need help with transportation to the pharmacy; is delivery or mail-order an option? Look for opportunities to reduce the frequency of medications. The fewer times each day medication must be taken, the better adherence will be.
- **Follow up.** Schedule follow-up appointments or calls with your patients to check in on their treatment. Assist with any problems and measure the adherence of their medication regimen.