



NEWSLETTER



Volume 7 | October 2024

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Message from our CEO

At Community Care Rx, our vision is to empower our partners by providing innovative solutions that streamline their operations and enhance their performance. Our goal is for your staff to reduce the time spent on pharmacy-related work by 60% through state-of-the-art technology, while also offering comprehensive training and continuing education to improve staff knowledge. By cutting unnecessary spending, we ensure our partners become healthier and stronger.

Recently, we implemented SOC 2 cybersecurity protocols, ensuring the highest level of data protection for our clients. Additionally, our infusion suites provide critical care in a safe, efficient manner. These initiatives directly benefit our DD/ID non-profit partners and the individuals they serve, ensuring a safer and more effective service environment. We are committed to helping you thrive.

*Hossam Maksoud, PharmD
Chief Executive Officer*

FDA warns of dosing errors tied to compounded Ozempic, Wegovy

Mackenzie Bean (Twitter)

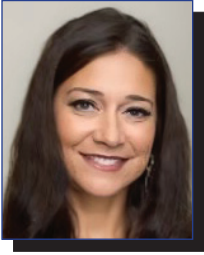
The FDA is warning healthcare providers of dosing errors associated with compounded versions of semaglutide, the active ingredient in Ozempic, Rybelsus and Wegovy. The agency has received reports of hospitalizations and adverse events tied to the issue, including gastrointestinal issues, fainting, headache, dehydration and acute pancreatitis, according to a July 26 update.

Most adverse events occurred when patients self-administered incorrect doses of weight loss drugs from multiple-dose vials, sometimes taking five to 20 times the intended amount. Several reports also involved clinicians miscalculating doses, resulting in patients receiving five to 10 times more than the intended dose.

The agency said patients' inexperience with self-injections and confusion over different measurement units may have contributed to the errors.

"FDA encourages health care providers and compounders to provide patients with the appropriate syringe size for the intended dose and counsel patients on how to measure the intended dose using the syringe," the agency said in the update. "Additionally, health care providers should be vigilant when prescribing and administering compounded semaglutide, as there may be different concentrations available."

Meet our team!



Jessica Lepurage
Pharmacy Director

My name is Jessica Lepurage . I have been a pharmacist for 27 years and have been with Community Care Rx for almost a year. I am a proud graduate of St John's University and went to retail upon graduation . Although long term care was new to me, it has quickly become a passion of mine . As the Pharmacy Director and Supervising Pharmacist, I oversee the entire operation and ensure that it runs smoothly and efficiently.

In my personal life , I am married and am the proud mother to three sons, ages 20, 18, and 10. My boys are the light of my life, and I do everything for them . For fun, I enjoy exercising , reading and spending time with my friends and family.

I am proud to represent Community Care Rx and strive every day to make patient care my top priority

Prevent Falls with the Science of Balance: Expert Tips and Strategies

By: Gina Veazey

For many years, falls prevention has relied primarily on improving balance. Today, says exercise physiologist Cate Reade, there is a more refined understanding of balance – and it's a game changer for falls prevention in senior living facilities.

Balance is driven, Reade says, by a complex system involving the joints, nerves and muscles. As people walk, nerves in the feet and ankles constantly collect information about the environment. The nerves share this information with the brain, which instantly analyzes it, instructing the rest of the body to make subtle adjustments. That process, called the proprioception, is how people stay upright and balanced.

Reade, who also is a registered dietitian, has been teaching, writing and prescribing healthy eating and exercise programs for over 35 years. In the most recent 10 years of this work, she has studied balance improvement in older adults, documenting her findings in a series of studies.

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**“ Working with
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the years to improve the pharmacy
services that we have for the
individuals we serve...
and have reduced medication
errors for them as well. ”**

The first round of Medicare drug price negotiations is nearing an end

Annika Kim Constantino & Ashley Capoot

Good afternoon! The first round of the Biden administration's Medicare drug price negotiations is nearly finished, with two major deadlines approaching.

President Joe Biden's signature Inflation Reduction Act gave Medicare the power to directly hash out drug prices with manufacturers for the first time in the federal program's nearly six-decade history. That process aims to make expensive medications more affordable for older Americans, but the pharmaceutical industry argues that it is a threat to their revenue, profits and drug innovation.

The government and manufacturers have been in talks since February, when Medicare sent its initial price offer for each of the 10 medications selected almost a year ago. That includes diabetes treatments from Merck, AstraZeneca and Boehringer Ingelheim and blood thinners from Johnson & Johnson and Bristol Myers Squibb, among other drugs.

The negotiation period officially ends next Thursday. Medicare will publish the final agreed-upon prices for the medications by the beginning of September, though the exact timing is still unclear.

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[First round](#)

Small Pharmacy Closures Spur Statehouse Battles on PBM Practices

Celine Castronuovo

Pharmacy trade groups are pushing for state legislation to regulate pharmacy benefit managers, arguing that PBMs are forcing community pharmacies to close across the US, including regions with few health-care options.

In 2024 state legislative sessions, lawmakers introduced more than 170 bills in 41 states seeking to regulate the entities that manage prescription drug benefits, according to the National Academy for State Health Policy. The top three PBMs—CVS Caremark, Cigna's Express Scripts, and UnitedHealth Group's OptumRx—control nearly 80% of the market.

Groups representing small, independent pharmacies and chains unaffiliated with PBMs have focused their advocacy on PBM practices they say put the most financial pressure on pharmacists: low reimbursement rates, charging health plans more than they pay back to pharmacies in a practice known as spread pricing, and pushing patients toward large pharmacy chains affiliated with PBMs.

Measures introduced in more than 30 states—10 of which were signed into law—include provisions to increase reimbursements PBMs give to pharmacies for purchasing and dispensing medications, and prohibit PBMs from steering patients away from independent pharmacies.

The surge in legislative activity around PBMs comes as the National Community Pharmacists Association reported nearly one independent pharmacy closure a day in the last year, with more than three times as many chain pharmacies shutting their doors. Nearly a third of NCPA members surveyed in February said they were considering closing this year due to lower reimbursements by PBMs.

PBMs are also in the spotlight at the federal level, with legislation under consideration to improve oversight on their role in shaping what Americans pay for prescription drugs. A July 9 report from the Federal Trade Commission detailed how PBMs' low reimbursements to independent pharmacies and steering of patients to affiliated pharmacies could be limiting competition and inflating drug costs.

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[Small Pharmacy](#)

Experts say a twice-yearly injection that offers 100% protection against HIV is 'stunning'

By **MARIA CHENG** and **GERALD IMRAY**

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Twice-yearly shots used to treat AIDS were 100% effective in preventing new infections in women, according to study results published Wednesday.

There were no infections in the young women and girls that got the shots in a study of about 5,000 in South Africa and Uganda, researchers reported. In a group given daily prevention pills, roughly 2% ended up catching HIV from infected sex partners.

"To see this level of protection is stunning," said Salim Abdool Karim of the injections. He is director of an AIDS research center in Durban, South Africa, who was not part of the research.

The shots made by U.S. drugmaker Gilead and sold as Sunlenca are approved in the U.S., Canada, Europe and elsewhere, but only as a treatment for HIV. The company said it is waiting for results of testing in men before seeking permission to use it to protect against infection.

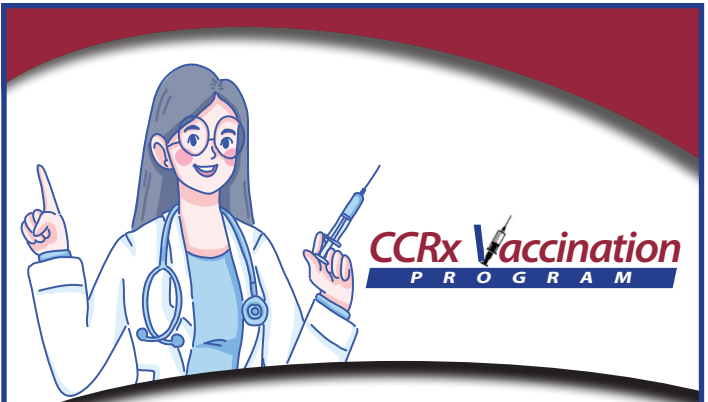
The results in women were published Wednesday in the New England Journal of Medicine and discussed at an AIDS conference in Munich. Gilead paid for the study and some of the researchers are company employees. Because of the surprisingly encouraging results, the study was stopped early and all participants were offered the shots, also known as lenacapavir.

While there are other ways to prevent HIV infection, like condoms or daily pills, consistent use has been a problem in Africa. In the new study, only about 30% of participants given Gilead's Truvada or Descovy prevention pills actually took them — and that figure dropped over time.

The prospect of a twice-a-year shot is "quite revolutionary news" for our patients, said Thandeka Nkosi, who helped run the Gilead research at the Desmond Tutu Health Foundation in Masiphumelele, South Africa. "It gives participants a choice and it just eliminates the whole stigma around taking pills" to prevent HIV.

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[HIV injections](#)



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CCRx announces Infusion Services



We are excited to announce the opening of our brand-new IV Infusion Suite! This state-of-the-art facility is designed to offer a comfortable, private, and tranquil environment for clients receiving infusion therapies. Featuring the latest technology and plush seating, the suite guarantees a premier experience by merging advanced medical care with a patient-centered approach. Our dedicated multidisciplinary team - including Medical Director Dr. Andrew Moawad, licensed Infusion Pharmacist Dr. Julian Kleinberg, and board-certified Critical Care Registered Nurse Nicole Moawad - has been instrumental in bringing this vision to life, ensuring that the suite meets the highest standards of cleanliness, care, and functionality.

This new addition highlights our ongoing commitment to enhancing patient care and operational excellence. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact this upgrade will have on both our patients and our healthcare team, reinforcing our dedication to excellence in every aspect of our care

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