

Dermatology Times

Clinical Analysis for Today's Skincare Specialists

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Tips to help patients lower costs

November 11, 2016

By Lisette Hilton

There are some things that dermatologists can do now to help patients lower their drug costs.

Think out of the box for cheaper alternatives

In a report about EpiPen prices released October 25, 2016, by Devon Herrick, senior fellow of the National Center for Policy Analysis (NCPA), a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization, Herrick points out that consumers have many options other than the expensive and better-known EpiPen. They can ask their doctors to prescribe a generic epinephrine auto-injector or ask if they are a candidate for a generic epinephrine ampule and a syringe or preloaded auto-injector. Research also shows that EpiPens are potent several years after expirations, so they can continue to use expired EpiPens, in some cases.

How about bypassing everyone and customizing drugs in your office?

Spencer Malkin, D.C., CEO of [Prescriber's Choice](#), says his business model is based on solving the lack of coverage from insurance companies for dermatologist-prescribed drugs.

His pharmaceutical company allows dermatologists to customize and dispense medications they prescribe at the time of patients' office visits.

"It's a completely new paradigm that allows the physician and the patient greater flexibility and control," Dr. Malkin says. "Instead of completing frustrating and costly prior authorizations that are frequently denied or that lead to less effective medications being used, physicians make better use of their time, knowledge and skills by personalizing their patients' medications."

The price the doctor charges the patient may be less than what a copay at the pharmacy would be if the drug was covered, according to Malkin. All the while, patients get immediate access to high-quality medications, he says.

Discount cards

Other options include drug discount cards. One example is from Watertree Health.

Watertree Health offers a free prescription discount card that gives patients access to more affordable medications, including those commonly prescribed for skin conditions, such as tretinoin cream, erythromycin-benzoyl gel and clindamycin phosphate pledget, says Shane Power, Watertree Health's president.

"Patients can check prices on their medications at RxPriceSavings.com. We've also made it easy for someone to get a card. Just text CARD to 95577 or go to WatertreeHealthCard.com to have one emailed, mailed or downloaded. And, it's easy to use the card. Just show the pre-activated card to the pharmacist when you fill a prescription," he says.