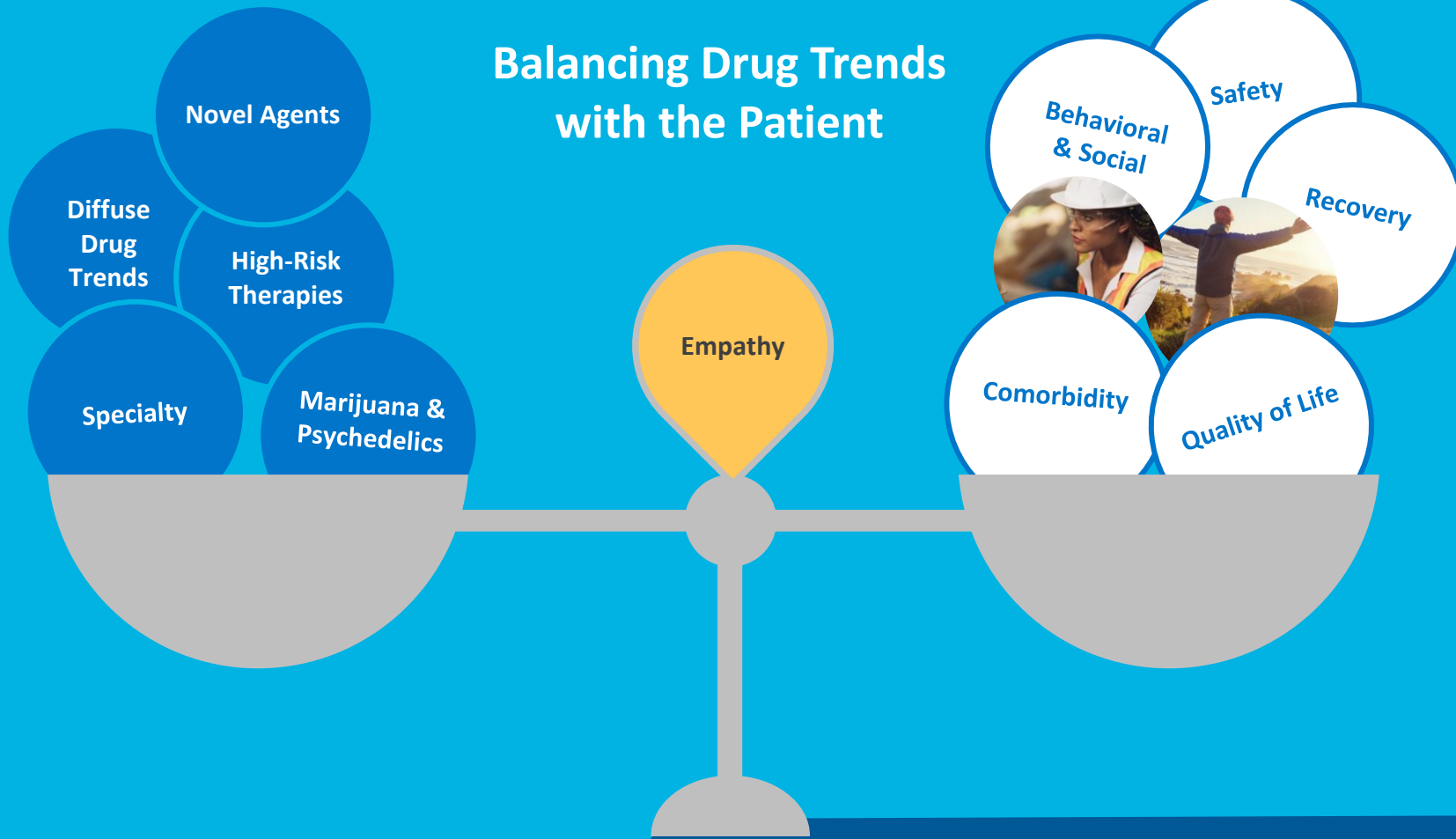


Prescribing Empathy:
**Weighing Patient Well-Being
in Workers' Comp Drug Therapy Trends**

2024 Montana Governor's Conference
Silvia Sacalis, BS, PharmD
Amanda Waltemath, PharmD, MPH



Balancing Drug Trends with the Patient





Drug Trends in Pain Management

Chronic Pain as a Factor in Prescribing Trends

TREATMENT GOALS



Control pain and
decrease suffering



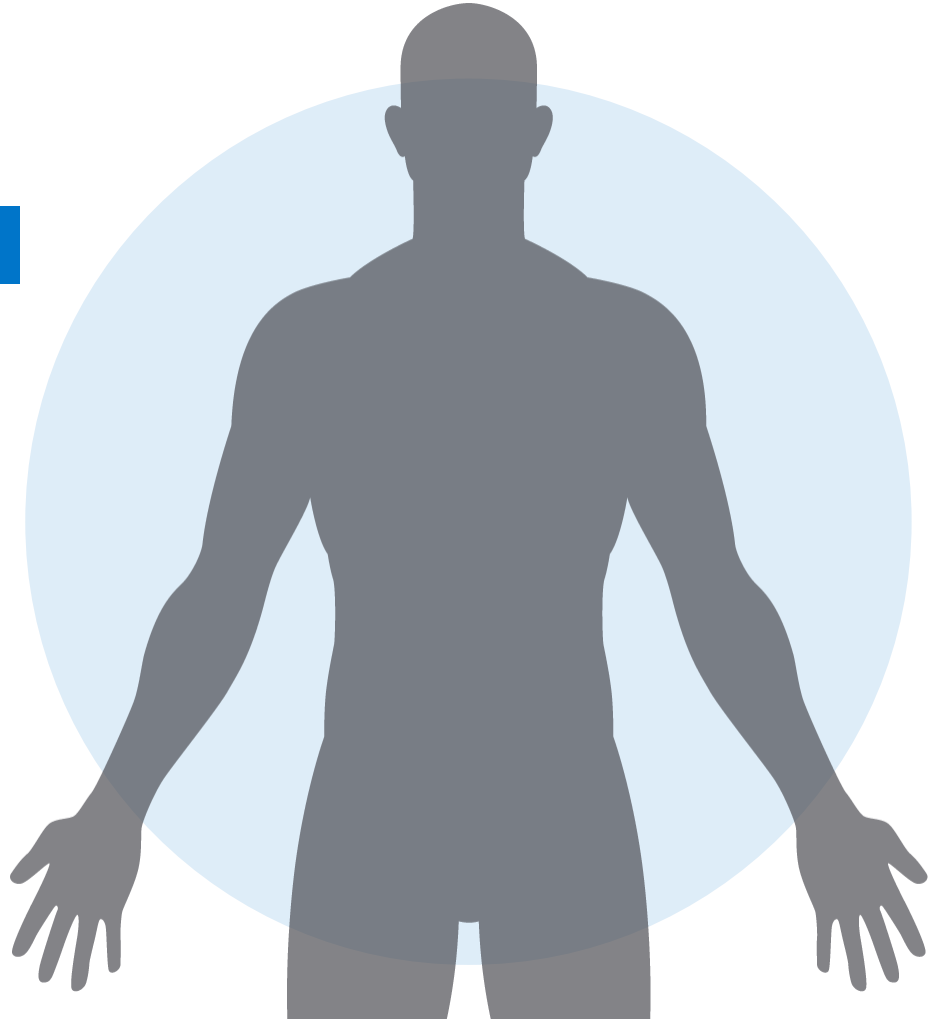
Decrease utilization of
healthcare system



Functional restoration



Patient safety & well-being



Reduced Opioid Prescribing Gives Way to Other Trends in Pain Management

Prescription Opioids 2012

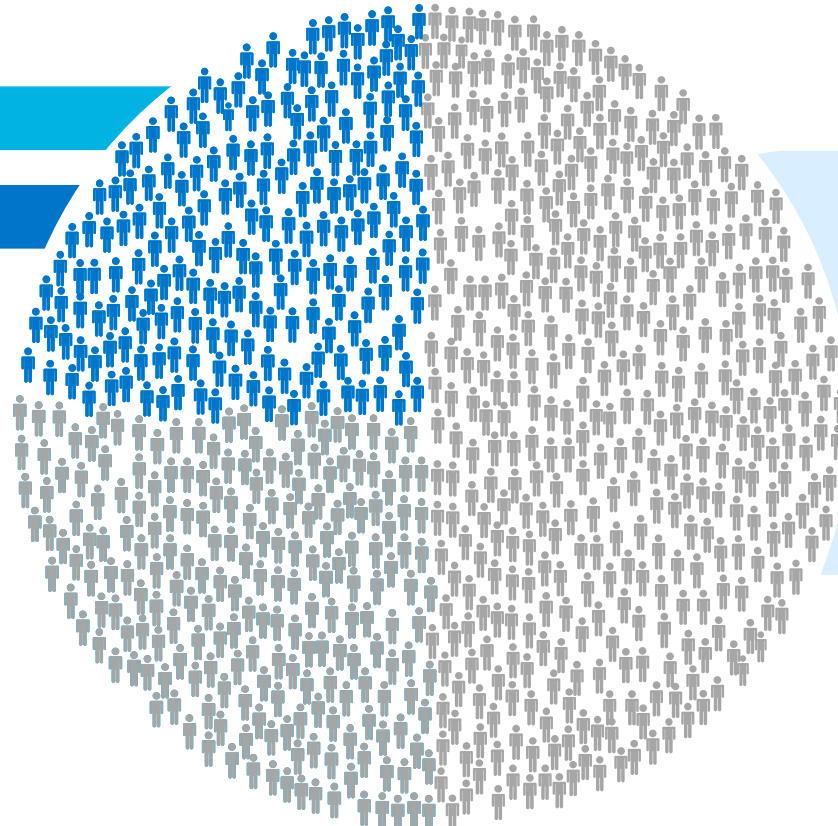
Prescription Opioids Today

6%

of workers' comp
drug spend¹

29%

reduction in opioid claims
from 2012-2022²



High-Risk Drug Trends

- Combinations
- Buprenorphine
- Anticonvulsants

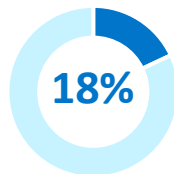
NSAIDs

Topicals

Reduced Opioid Prescribing Drives Other Trends in Pain Management



**Positive overall shift
away from opioids**



of workers' comp
Rx drug payments¹



NSAIDs

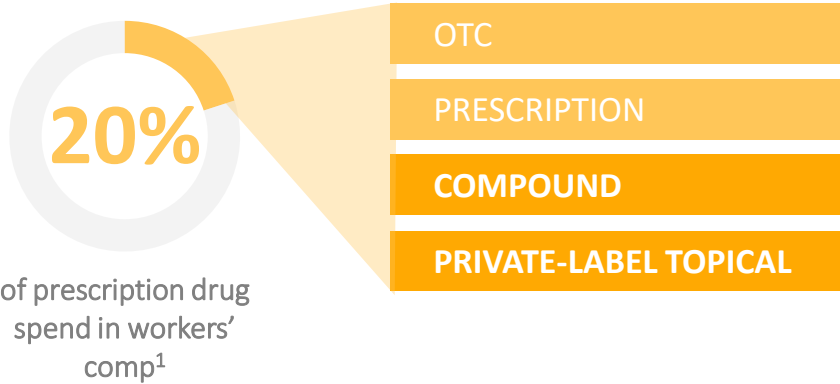


GENERALLY SAFE AND COST-EFFECTIVE

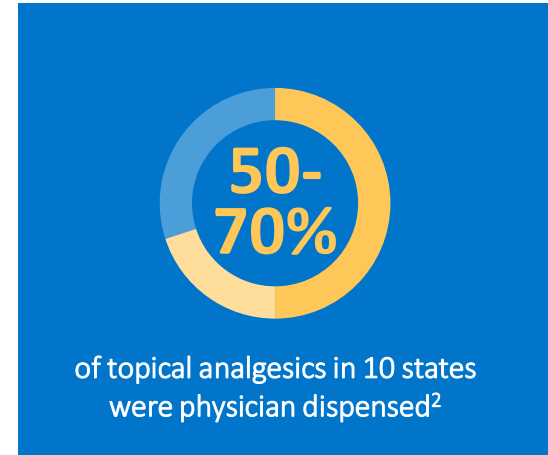
Treatment Takeaways

- + Common examples: ibuprofen, naproxen, celecoxib, diclofenac, ketorolac
- + Consider risk vs benefit
 - Drug-disease interactions (e.g., cardiac status)
 - Drug-drug interactions (e.g., anticoagulants)
- + Use lowest dose for shortest duration possible

Reduced Opioid Prescribing Drives Other Trends in Pain Management



Dermatologicals



COST CONCERNS



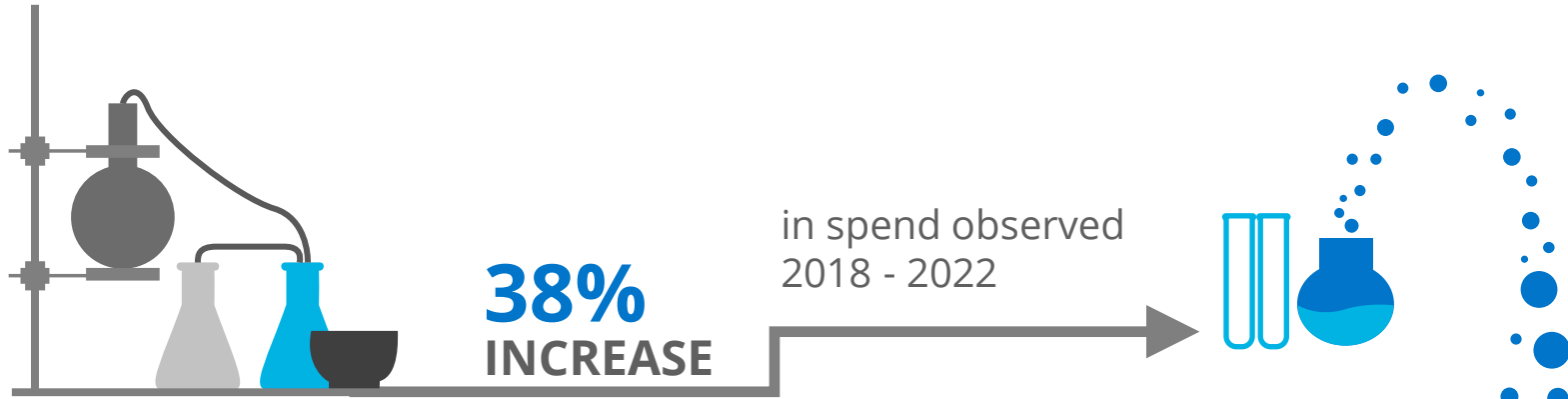
SAFETY CONCERNS

1. Wang D, Thumula V, Liu TC. Interstate variations and trends in workers' compensation drug payments: 2018Q1 to 2021Q1 – a WCRI FlashReport.
2. Thumula V, Liu TC. Topical analgesic use in workers' compensation. Workers' Compensation Research Institute. Aug 26, 2021.

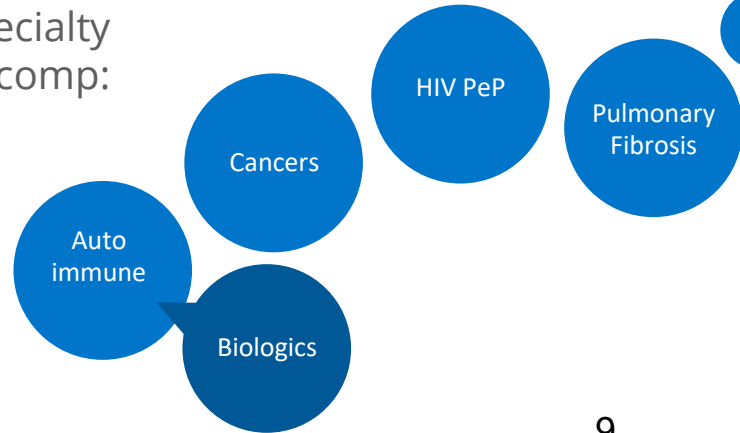


Specialty and Diffuse Drug Trends

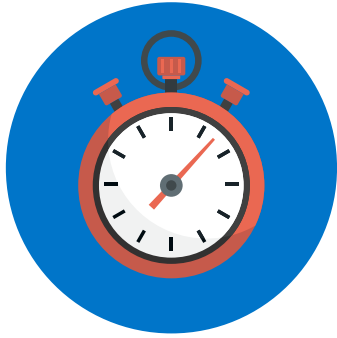
Continued Growth of Specialty



Examples of specialty conditions in workers' comp:



Specialty Drug Management Considerations



Short-term vs
chronic conditions



Adherence

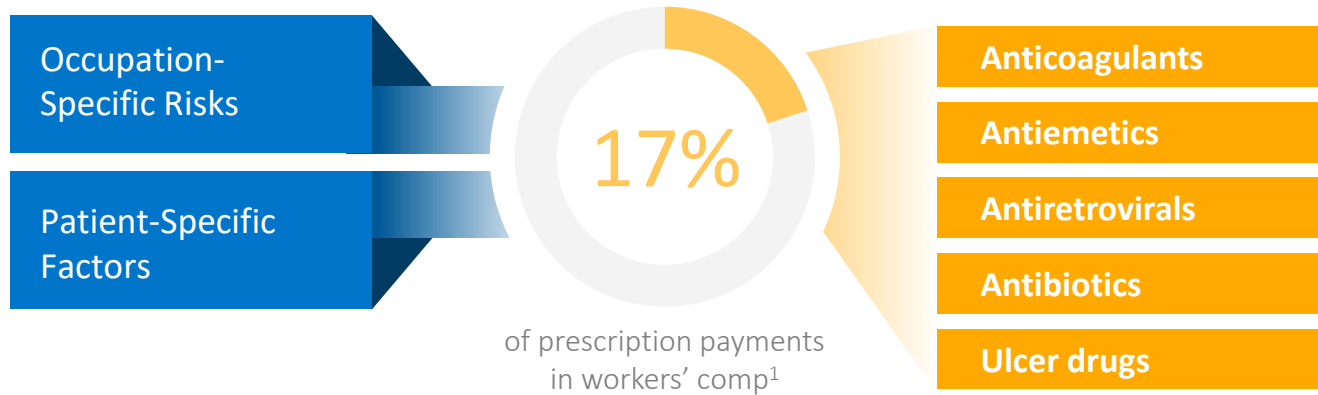


Side effect
management



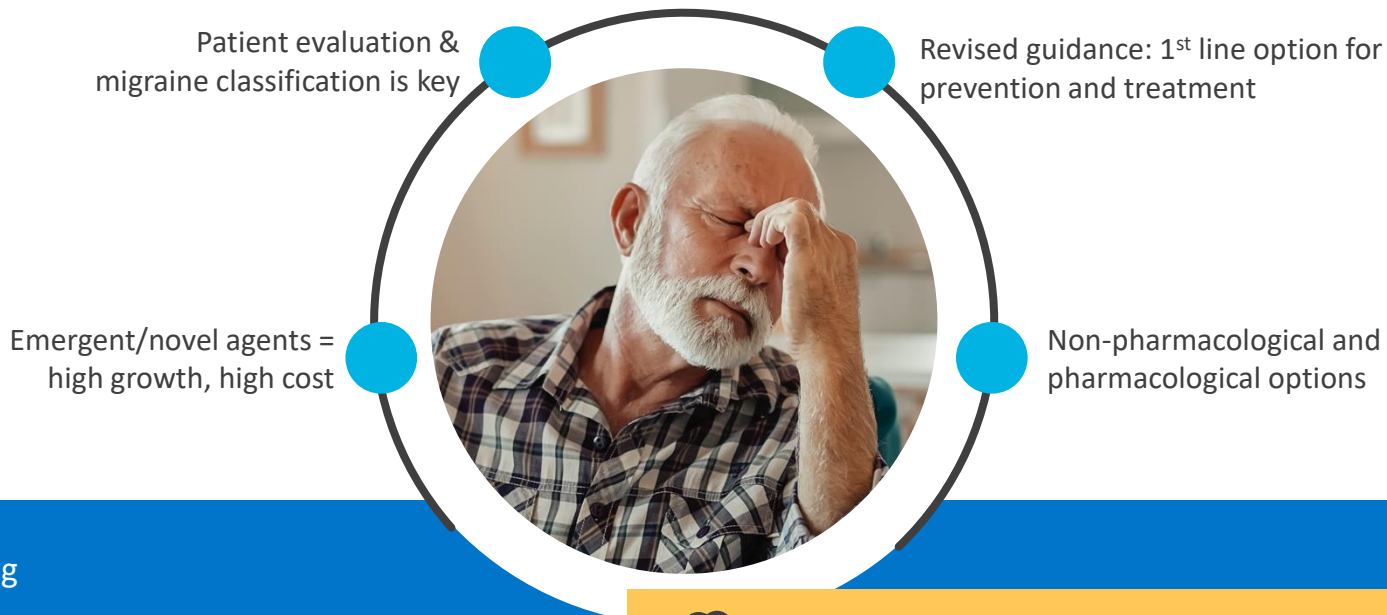
Storage &
distribution

Worker Populations and Diffuse Drug Trends



1. Wang D, Thumula V, Liu TC. Interstate variations and trends in workers' compensation drug payments: 2018Q1 to 2021Q1 – a WCRI FlashReport. Workers' Compensation Research Institute. June 16, 2022.

Diffuse Drug Trend: Novel Migraine Agents



+ Aimovig

+ Emgality

+ Ajovy

+ Vyepti

+ Ubrelvy

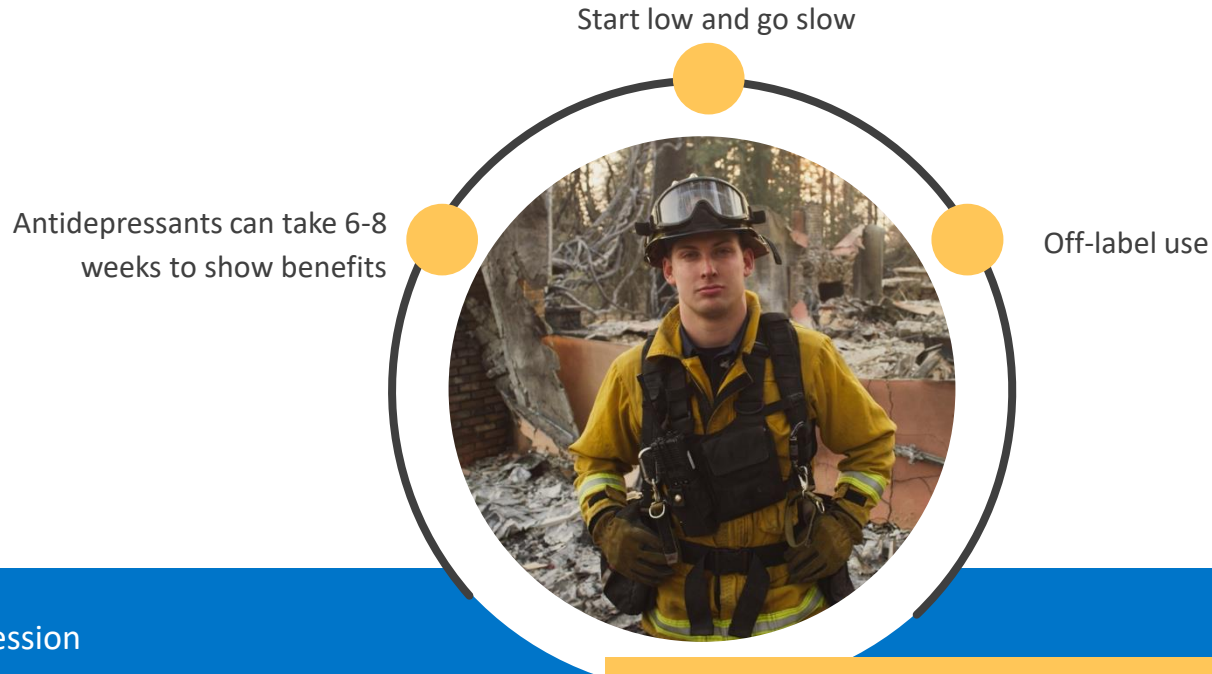
+ Nurtec ODT

+ Qulipta



Example Populations: TBI or injury exacerbating preexisting migraine conditions

Diffuse Drug Trend: Psychiatric Medications



+ Depression

+ Anxiety

+ PTSD

+ Use of antidepressants for Tx of pain

+ Etc



Example Populations: Any injury with potential psychiatric impact

Medications to Treat Comorbidities: Potentially Outside of a Claim

Newer, high-cost brand drugs can increase costs

Susceptible to polypharmacy

4 in 5 Americans aged 50+ have 1 or more chronic conditions¹

Drug-drug and drug-disease interactions



Trending Drug Class:



GLP-1 agonists
Ozempic & Wegovy (semaglutide)



Example Populations: Diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular conditions

1. John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health analysis.

Hot Emerging Trend: **GLP-1 Agonists**



Obesity vs Diabetes Indication



Drug Shortages



Adverse Reactions/
Warnings



Compounded &
Counterfeit Concerns



Clinical
Appropriateness



Discontinuation/
Weight Gain



COMP QUESTIONS:

Cost, Compensability and Clinical Appropriateness

Marijuana



LEGALITY

EFFICACY

SAFETY

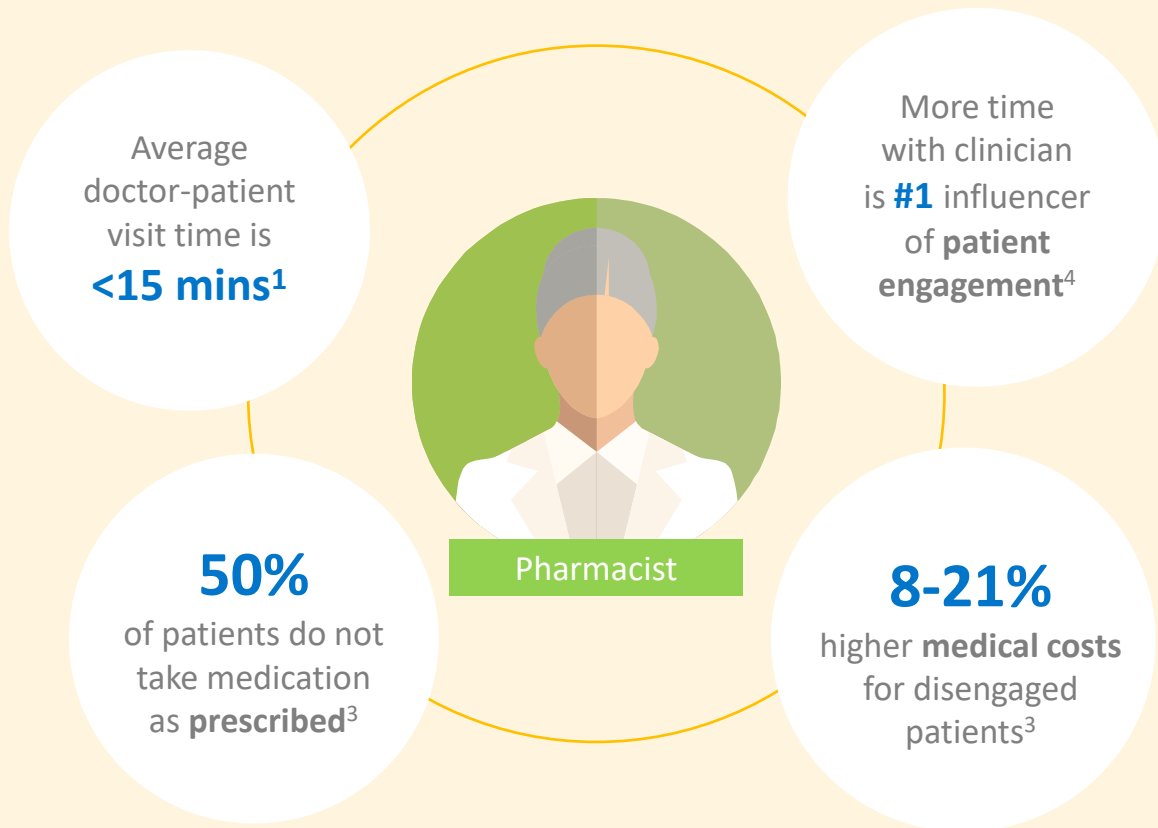
Psychedelics





Empathy & Engagement

Pharmacist's Opportunity to Engage



A Patient-Centric Approach: Case Examples

- Duplicate NSAID (ketorolac injections, diclofenac DR) with hypertension and GERD
- Discontinue ketorolac; consider diclofenac replacement

Drug-Drug
& -Disease
Risk



- Triplicate anticholinergic agents (Stiolto, Combivent, Spiriva)
- Streamline to Trelegy to reduce IW confusion and potential for side effects

Reducing
Rx Burden



- Worsening depression & suicidality on maximum dose of 2 SRIs + aripiprazole
- Streamline SRIs to 1: duloxetine for depression + pain

Mental
Health
Impacts





A Pharmacist, A Daughter

My personal narrative on opioids

Amanda Waltemath, PharmD, MPH

Questions

THANK YOU

