

Project Title

Public/patient educational handout on why the cost of dermatologic drugs has increased so dramatically.

Society and Author: Georgia Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery (GSDDS)

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Brief Summary:

The GSDDS is requesting funding for direct and indirect expenses associated with researching, developing, producing and distributing a professionally printed pamphlet intended for handout in dermatology practices in Georgia for one year, the content focused on educating patients as to why the cost of dermatologic drugs has increased so dramatically.

Goals and Objectives

Many doctors prescribe the drugs without a second thought. But increasingly, some dermatologists say, patients are complaining about a recent, mysterious and rapid rise in price.¹

The hefty price increases have stumped doctors and their patients. "It seems to me that something is going on, but I don't have quantitative details," said Dr. Steven R. Feldman, a professor of dermatology at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, N.C. "I wouldn't have thought that these old-timey, generic drugs would be very costly."²

In all, the prices of more than a dozen generic dermatology drugs have increased significantly since 2010, according to the distributor Cardinal Health, which tracks price fluctuations in generic drugs. Express Scripts, the pharmacy benefit manager, found that total spending on dermatology drugs increased 18.2 percent in the first five months of 2012 over last year, driven mainly by the rising cost of individual prescriptions.³

Are physicians fully aware of the cost of the drugs they are prescribing? Will patients stop therapies due to rising costs? Are there other options? Physicians should be educated and patients must be informed as to why the price of their prescriptions has risen. Information garners confidence and furthers the patient/doctor relationship all too often lost in a perceived "dollars and cents" centered healthcare environment. A dialogue is critical to continued access to care. Information is the impetus.

The GSDDS polled their membership as to their needs on this issue and found that 93.75% of respondents would find it of value and would be willing to distribute a professionally researched and produced flyer related to the cost of drugs to their patients.

The GSDDS would like to give their members a tool to start that conversation.

Project Design, Method, Timeline and Evaluation

(accomplished by date)

January 31 Hire healthcare communications (A) and graphic design (B) professionals
February 21 Research and copy draft (for pamphlet and outcomes evaluation)
complete (A).
March 7 Review and edit of copy complete (A and GSDDS Executive Committee).
March 21 Design of brochure complete (B), reviewed and approved (A and GSDDS
Executive Committee), PDF emailed to dermatology practices in Georgia with order
form.
April 7 Q2 print complete
April 14 Q2 orders fulfilled and shipped
July 7 Q3 print complete
July 14 Q3 orders fulfilled and shipped
Sept 20 Mid-project outcomes assessment requested and report generated (A)
October 7 Q4 print complete
October 14 Q4 orders fulfilled and shipped
January 7 Q1 print complete
January 14 Q1 orders fulfilled and shipped
March 31 Post-project outcomes assessment requested and report generated (A)

References:

1. ***Soaring Ointment Prices Are a Dermatologic Mystery***, Katie Thomas, New York Times, August 9, 2012. ^{1, 2, 3}
2. ***Why are Generic Drug Prices Shooting Up***, Forbes, February 27, 2015
3. **GSDDS Member Needs Assessment**