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Overview

The need
The Georgia Department of Community Health needed to analyze its population to project the financial impact of new drugs, control costs and improve patient outcomes.

The solution
By using IBM DataProbe® and Advantage Suite® solutions, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) analyzed the impact of high-priced specialty drugs on overall population health in its community and developed policies to help optimize care while controlling costs.

The benefit
As a result of engaging care teams and optimizing technology with insights from DataProbe and Advantage Suite, the Georgia DCH created a sustainable specialty drug policy and established key benchmarks for measuring ongoing expansion of the program.

Georgia Department of Community Health

Managing drug costs and defining policy with the DataProbe® and Advantage Suite® solutions, part of the HHS Analytics Foundation.

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Since 2008, brand name drug inflation has increased 15 times faster than the Consumer Price Index, and specialty drugs have driven a large portion of those costs. In fact, specialty drugs could make up two-thirds of the country’s drug costs by 2020. With new drugs coming to market seemingly every day, building a drug policy based on hard, evidence-based criteria for a population as large and diverse as the DCH’s, can be next to impossible.

“I think everyone in our industry wants to make certain that, when they go to make strategic decisions, those decisions are based on actionable information and knowledge. But without accurate, timely data, reporting and analysis, there is far too much guesswork.” said Daphanie Keit, Director of Health Information and Analytics at the Georgia Department of Community Health.

Data-inspired action plans

One such drug that underscored this problem for the Georgia DCH was SPINRAZA®, the first FDA-approved drug used in treating spinal muscular atrophy, a rare neuromuscular disorder. The drug had just come to market in December of 2016, and it had shown to be highly effective, but at a significant cost.

“We pulled the corresponding codes for spinal muscular atrophy – ICD 9 and ICD 10 – and looked at services from January 2013 through year to date 2017. But because of the way this particular condition is defined, that proved to be insufficient,” Keit said.

Keit continued to explain that spinal muscular atrophy is defined by four different types, and those phases are based on the onset year in the patient: Type 1 is someone who demonstrates onset of SMA symptoms between zero and six months; Type 2 is from 7 months to 18 months; Type 3 is from 19 months all the way up to 18 years of age; and Type 4 is adult onset.

“There weren’t ICD 9 and 10 codes that specifically made that distinction, which is why the IBM Watson Health solutions were so desperately needed. We needed to search within the claims data to find when the person’s first SMA diagnosis was, and then compare that to the patient’s date of birth to get an indication of when that onset actually happened to get an idea of how much and how often our population would potentially utilize SPINRAZA,” she said.

“Overall, we found 188 cases of SMA over that time period, and once we used the DataProbe tool to dig deeper, we found that the population primarily affected by a policy decision is 101 patients, most of that population was adult onset and chronic juvenile.”

Setting a policy, with an eye toward expansion

Once the Georgia DCH had the scope of the prevalence of SMA, and the potential utilization of SPINRAZA, Keit and her team could map out an action plan.

“We gave this analysis to our budget and finance group for them to do the necessary projections, and based on cost, the Department was able to allocate sufficient funding to cover SPINRAZA for SMA patients,” she said.

By utilizing the data analytics capabilities available in the IBM Watson Health solutions, the Georgia DCH can keep a close eye on its population’s clinical data. “When it comes to implementing our enterprise data warehouse, one of the things that we are excited about is that we’ll be integrating clinical data with our claims data,” Keit concluded. “So as time goes on, we really want to look at the effectiveness of this treatment against our SMA population.”
For more information

For more information on IBM Watson Health, visit: ibm.com/watson/health/government

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Solution components

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About IBM Watson Health

Each day, professionals throughout the health ecosystem make powerful progress toward a healthier future. At IBM Watson Health, we help them remove obstacles, optimize efforts and reveal new insights to support the people they serve. Working across the landscape, from payers and providers to governments and life sciences, we bring together deep health expertise; proven innovation; and the power of artificial intelligence to enable our customers to uncover, connect and act — as they work to solve health challenges for people everywhere.

Notes


For more information on IBM Watson Health, visit: ibm.com/watson/health/government

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