

T.I.M. BITS



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CAN I GET A BETTER DEAL PAYING CASH FOR MY PRESCRIPTIONS?

By Dr. Julie Price

Americans pay the highest drug prices in the world. Unlike other countries, drug prices are not regulated by the government.

A study in the March 2018 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association analyzed 9.5 million pharmacy claims over the first half of 2013. The researchers found that approximately 23% of all claims involved overpayments—situations in which the co-pay charged to the patient exceeded what the insurer paid the pharmacy to fill the prescription. This was especially true with generic medications. This resulted in patients paying \$135 million in overpayments. Analyzing 12 of the 20 most commonly prescribed medications, patients overpaid 33% of the time.

So, why are we paying more for prescription co-pays than the cash price for a medication 23-33% of the time? There have been gag clauses legally preventing pharmacists from telling you the cash price unless you ask. In Sept 2018, Congress banned these gag orders. For commercial insurance patients, this ban took effect immediately. However, for Medicare beneficiaries the ban does not take effect until January 1, 2020.

We must be our own advocates. Don't hesitate to ask the cash price for a prescription medication if the insurance co-pay seems high. Also, shop around. Various chains will price medications differently, and significant savings can occur. Discount drug cards for GoodRx and Singlecare are also available in our office at check-out. GoodRX.com is also a good source for coupons for cash savings.

What is a Hospitalist?

By Dr. Julie Price

At Troy Internal Medicine (TIM), we work with a team of hospitalists to care for our patients when hospitalized at Beaumont Royal Oak or Troy. Our hospitalist group, Hospital Consultants PC, has taken care of our patients since 1999. There are currently 38 hospitalists between Beaumont Royal Oak and Troy that help care for our hospitalized patients.

A hospitalist is a physician who primarily devotes their practice to the care of patients in the hospital. Hospitalists are board certified in Internal Medicine, just as are the doctors at TIM. They work in the hospital. They oversee your care during the hospital stay.

Several years ago, your primary doctor (PCP) would see you both in the hospital and in the office. What changed? The present criteria for admission to a hospital are quite strict. Many procedures or illnesses that would previously have been performed or treated as an inpatient in the hospital (even a few years ago) are now done in the outpatient setting. Subsequently, patients admitted to the hospital in 2019 tend to have more complicated illnesses and/or procedures.

Having a hospitalist present throughout the day and taking care of you during your stay is beneficial. The hospitalist oversees your care. They will see you every day to direct your treatment while in the hospital, and coordinate care with other physicians during your stay. This doctor is available to you and your family to answer questions and discuss your care. The hospitalist can meet with families during the day and be present for any emergencies that may arise. This is certainly better for patient care rather than your PCP trying to go back and forth between seeing patients in the office and in the hospital. Research has shown that hospitalists improve patients' outcomes after hospitalization and lower the risk of readmission to the hospital.

Many patients have concerns about the communication between your PCP and the hospitalist. Your PCP and the hospitalist work together. Your physician can provide information about your past health history to the hospitalist, and the two doctors can discuss any significant findings or events. At the time of your admission the hospitalist notifies your physician, informs him or her of changes while you are hospitalized, and notifies when discharge occurs. The hospitalist also prepares a detailed report of findings and treatment which is sent to your PCP. In summary, one of the founders of Hospital Consultants, Dr. Kathryn Wease, says this when asked what she would want our patients to know: "We want them to be assured we work closely with their PCP to provide the highest quality medical care."

Have you heard the N.E.W.S.?

Troy Internal Medicine would like to invite you to our **FREE** health education lectures presented by Nanette Cameron, RDN. She will be discussing the 4 pillars of health: **Nutrition-Exercise-Wellness-Sleep.**

Wednesday, June 5th	@ 10:00 am
Wednesday, June 26th	@ 6:00 pm
Wednesday, July 10 th	@ 10:00 am
Wednesday, July 17 th	@ 6:00 pm
Wednesday, August 7 th	@ 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, August 21 st	@ 6:00 p.m.

Please **RSVP** within **24** hours of the event to **248-952-5083.**

Feeling Stressed Out?

Karen Samosiuk, our Social Worker, hosts a Stress Management Class for FREE:

Thursday, June 20th	10 am – 11:30 am 6 pm – 7:30 pm
Thursday, July 25th	10 am – 11:30 am 6 pm – 7:30 pm
Thursday, August 22nd	10 am – 11:30 am 6 pm – 7:30 pm

Please **RSVP @ 248-952-5083.**

Did You Know?

Troy Internal Medicine has a provider on call **24** hours a day, **7** days a week, when the office is closed and on holidays. We also offer same-day appointments for urgent care issues, as well as **Saturday Urgent Care** hours from **9am-12pm** (phones go on at 8:30am), except for holidays. Before heading to the Emergency Room or Urgent Care, Call Us First.

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, however, please call 911 and go to your nearest emergency room.

Important Phone Numbers

Troy Internal Medicine	248-267-5000
Troy Internal Medicine Fax	248-267-5001
Billing Department	248-267-5000-4
Prior Authorization	248-267-5000-7
Nutrition and Wellness Center	248-952-5083
Nutrition and Wellness Center Fax	248-952-5108
Research	248-312-0025
After Hours (<u>5pm until 7:30 am next day</u>)	248-351-4708

15 Minute Rule

If you have **NOT** been **CALLED** within **15 MINUTES** of checking in, please see the receptionist.

Co-Pays

Just a reminder that **co-pays are due at the time of service.** We do accept personal check, cash, Visa and Mastercard as acceptable forms of payment. **Please have your form of payment ready at checkout**

Shingrix Vaccinations

The Shingrix vaccine (for shingles prevention) is currently on a **national backorder.** If, and when, we receive a shipment of the Shingrix vaccine we are contacting patients that have already had their first Shingrix shot. We are contacting these patients in date order. Due to the national backorder we are not able to start new Shingrix patients.

Prior Authorizations

Prior authorizations are submitted to Troy Internal Medicine by pharmacies on behalf of patients when medications are found to be no longer on a patient's formulary. Our Prior Authorization Department works on these requests as they are received. Sometimes pharmacies do not submit an automatic request to our Prior Authorization Department. If you need a prior authorization you may request your pharmacy to submit a request on your behalf. If your pharmacy will not submit the request, please provide the following information:

1. Your Name
2. Your Date of Birth
3. Medication name, dose, frequency, and how taken (i.e. oral/injection)
4. Insurance information
5. Failed/tried medications
6. Whether or not you have had a prior authorization for this medication previously

Do You Need a Refill?

Stop! Are you out of your medication?

Before calling the office for a refill please check your pill bottle. Often your physician has provided the pharmacy with a script that contains refills. The refill number will be located on the bottom left of your prescription bottle (i.e. Refills: 3 until 05/01/2019). If there are refills listed on your pill bottle please contact the pharmacy directly to get your refill processed. In the case that you are out of refills, feel free to contact our office directly. One of our receptionists will get a message to your physician to get the process completed. **Please be aware that refills may take up to 48 hours to complete.** Please call us prior to running out of your medication to ensure that your medication can be refilled in a timely manner.