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Study Finds Children More Likely to Receive Recommended RSV Medication Doses When Administered Through Specialty Pharmacy

ST. PAUL, MINN., – October 20, 2011 – Children given an injectable medication to help prevent severe respiratory illness had a 17.6 percent higher likelihood of receiving the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended doses when they were administered through a specialty pharmacy rather than a traditional pharmacy, according to a new study released today by pharmacy benefit manager Prime Therapeutics (Prime). The study will be presented today at the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy's (AMCP) Educational Conference in Atlanta, Ga.

Palivizumab (Synagis®) is the only preventive therapy approved for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a severe respiratory illness that is the leading cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children under one year of age. The injectable medication is given monthly to infants at high risk, and completing the course of treatment has been shown to decrease costly RSV-related hospitalizations.

Researchers from Prime and two of Prime's Blue Cross and Blue Shield clients used medical and pharmacy claims data from 2,853,925 commercially insured members in the Midwest to identify individuals with a palivizumab claim during the 2009-2010 RSV season. From this, researchers determined 445 members met the analytic criteria and 325 members utilized a specialty pharmacy – a pharmacy that includes access and support for drugs that have high acquisition costs, are difficult to manage, and present reimbursement challenges – for all doses fulfilled.

The analysis found 83.4 percent of infants and children who obtained their palivizumab from a specialty pharmacy received the recommended doses, compared to 65.8 percent who received their medication from a non-specialty pharmacy.

"RSV is a serious illness for infants and children and receiving the proper dose of palivizumab can keep children healthy and prevent unnecessary hospitalizations," said Patrick Gleason, PharmD, director of clinical outcomes assessment for Prime. "This study emphasizes how specialty pharmacies can help improve patient compliance and treatment course completion."

Prime Therapeutics is a pharmacy benefit management company dedicated to providing innovative, clinically-based, cost-effective pharmacy solutions for clients and members. Providing pharmacy benefit services nationwide to nearly 17 million covered lives, its client base includes Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, employer and union groups, and third-party administrators. Headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota, Prime Therapeutics is collectively owned by 12 Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, subsidiaries or affiliates of those Plans. Learn more at www.primetherapeutics.com.

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