

Medication synchronization guide for the pharmacy owner

Med sync sponsor

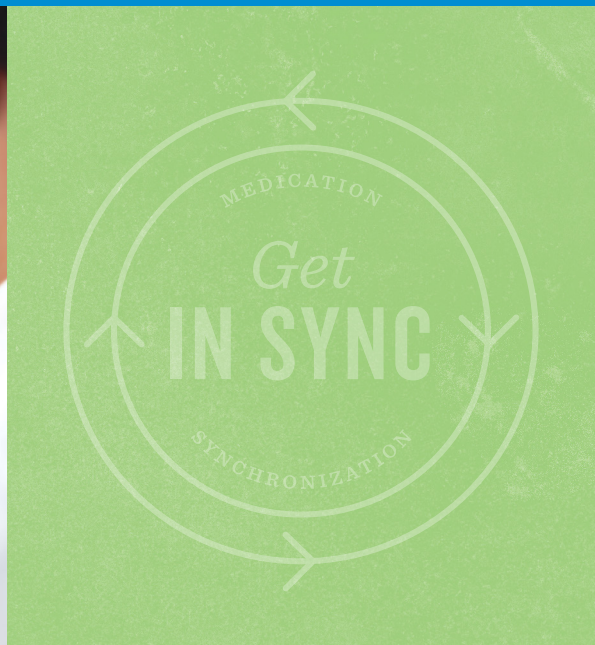
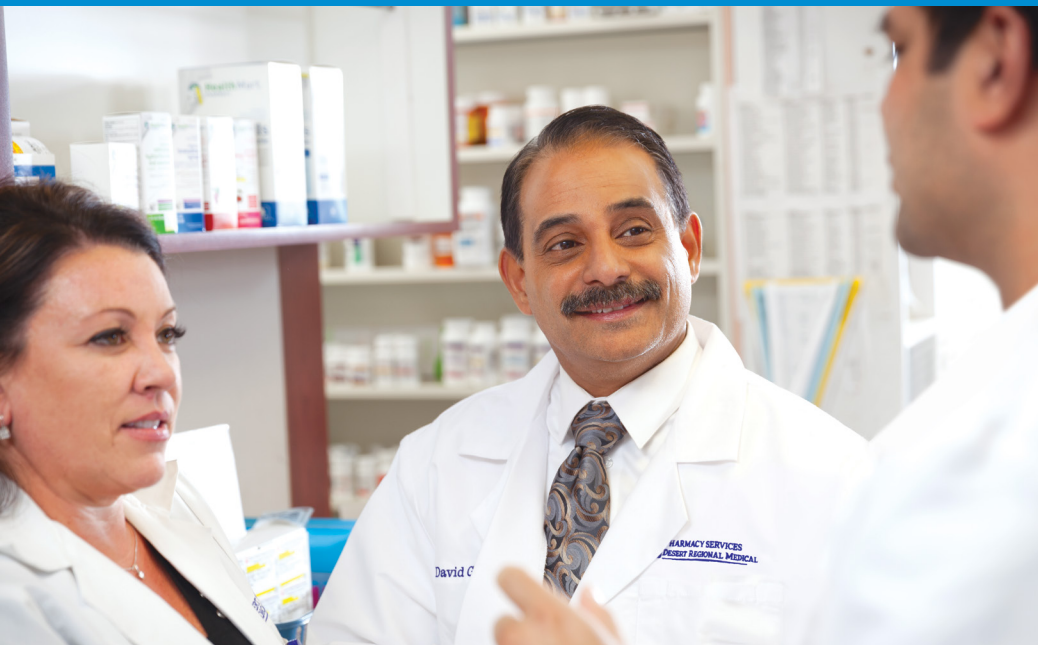




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Overview of med sync pharmacy roles

The business of pharmacy is changing. Congratulations on making the strategic decision to invest time and resources to adopt medication synchronization (med sync) and transform your pharmacy for the future.

This commitment to shifting workflow and developing new channels to engage and support your patients is a big one and can invoke both excitement and fear for the entire pharmacy staff — from techs, to pharmacists, and even to owners.

As with anything in life, we understand that change can be overwhelming. But we've learned from experience with independent pharmacies like yours, and we can help make this a positive change that leads to successful outcomes for your business, your staff and your patients.

The following members of your staff will need to be involved in your med sync program:



PHARMACY OWNER: **MED SYNC SPONSOR**



PHARMACISTS:

- Designated pharmacist: **MED SYNC CHAMPION**
 - Other pharmacists: **MED SYNC FACILITATOR**
-



TECHNICIANS:

- Designated technician: **MED SYNC CHAMPION**
 - Other technicians: **MED SYNC FACILITATOR**
-



OTHER STAFF

- Cashier, clerks, etc.: **MED SYNC FACILITATOR**



We’ve referred to members of your staff as “champions” and “facilitators,” but what do these terms mean?

What’s a champion?

This appointed pharmacist and technician will be the most med sync savvy of the staff; with you, the owner, they share an important role in not only accountability across the entire pharmacy, but also in goal setting, celebrations of milestones, and keeping sync top of mind. Utilize them to answer staff questions about med sync and keep the team motivated to continue the process even when it feels challenging. Work with your champions to create a pharmacy “vision” that helps drive med sync’s successful adoption.

What’s a facilitator?

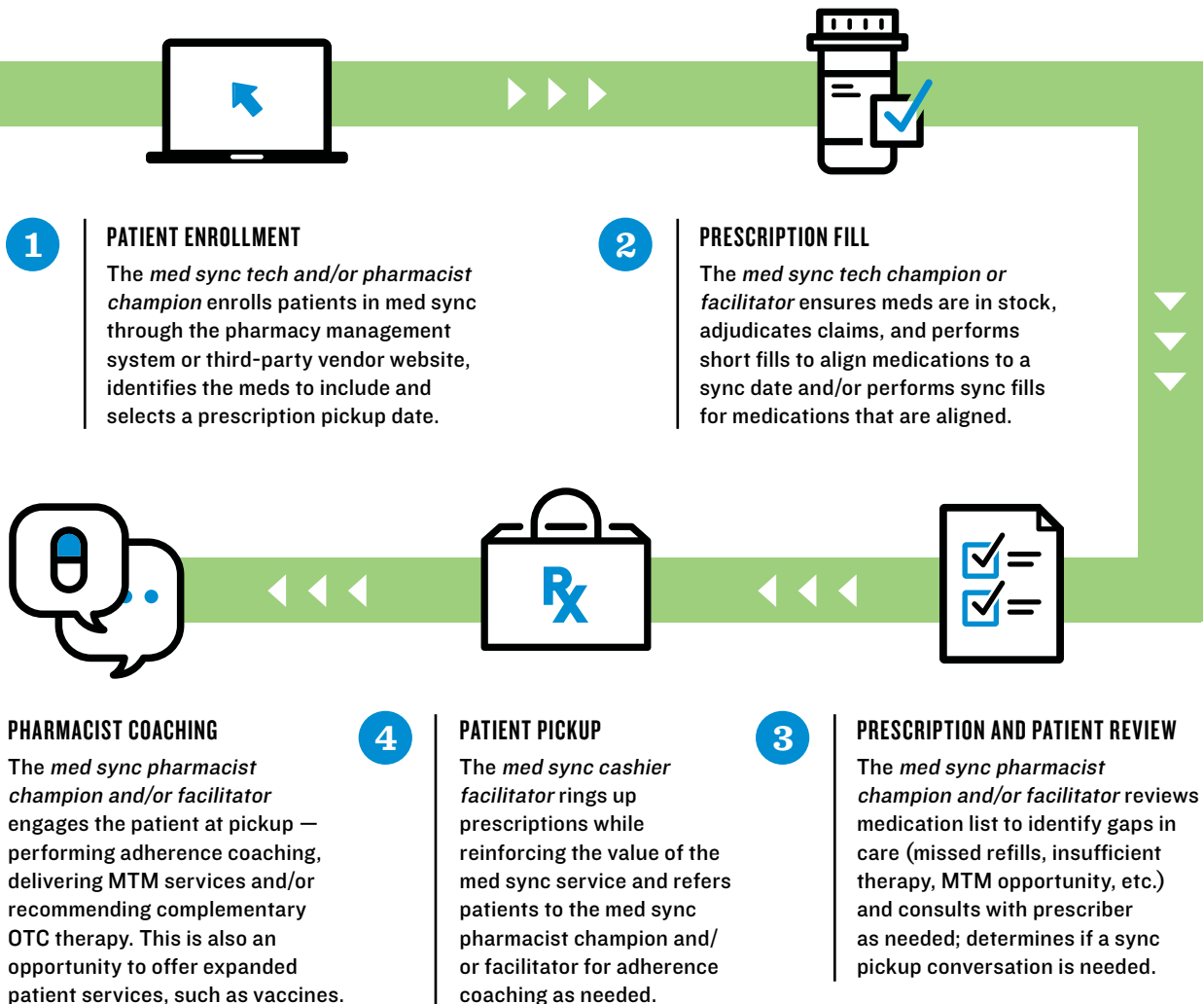
“Facilitator” is a term to apply to your “champion-in-training” technicians, pharmacists and cashiers — they are integral to med sync’s successful adoption and execution. Facilitators are the doers and, oftentimes, the central nervous system of the program. Without the support and execution of the facilitators, med sync won’t succeed.

Med Sync WORKFLOW

Overview

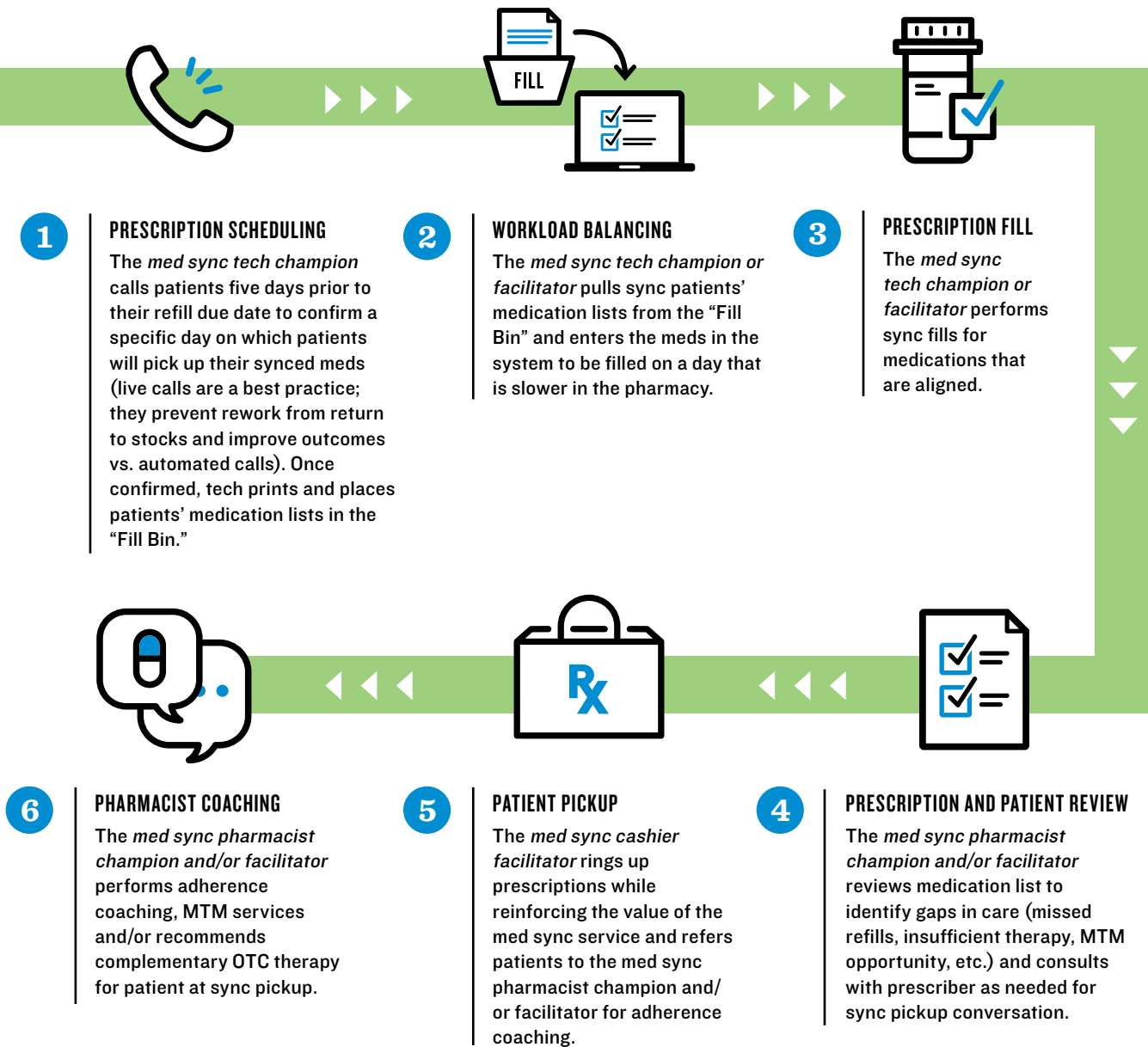
Med sync introduces changes to traditional pharmacy workflow. There are two workflow scenarios that are typically employed to support med sync: (1) same-day enrollment and general process; and (2) monthly med sync refill management. The following are sample diagrams of both workflows:

Scenario 1: Same-day enrollment and general process



Scenario 2: Monthly med sync refill management

Once patients are enrolled, the following workflow is recommended to help maintain your med sync patient population. To realize some of the operational efficiencies, it can be feasible to shift the sync fills to slower-volume days in the pharmacy.



For in-depth instructions on the med sync process, leverage Health Mart's "Med Sync Step-by-Step Guide," an on-the-job, technology-agnostic resource.

The owner's role: Med sync sponsor

The importance of the owner's role as med sync sponsor is all encompassing ... can you say: Leader? Quarterback? Cheerleader? Therapist? Marketer?

As the owner of the pharmacy, your role is integral to the success of implementing med sync in your pharmacy and changing the way your pharmacy runs.

The leader

Sell the vision of what could be to your team. Communicate the financial, operational and clinical benefits to your staff to ensure they also believe that the changes associated with med sync are justified given the direction in which pharmacy is heading. Health Mart's "Change Management 101" resource has been created to help you navigate this change. The talking points in the Resource section of this document will help guide you through conversations with your staff.

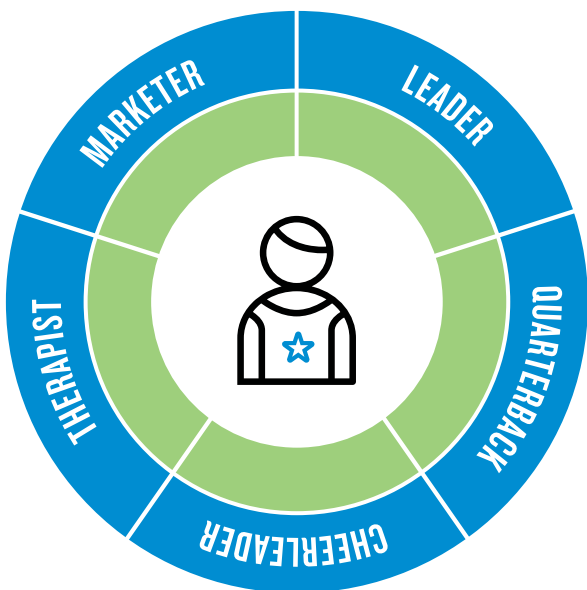
The quarterback

Help your team understand the game plan. Communicate to your staff what you have learned about implementing and maximizing med sync from Health Mart's "Get In Sync Playbook." Be sure they understand not only the mechanics of med sync, but also that each staff member plays a critical role in the implementation and day-to-day success of the program. Designating staff that you can recognize as "MVPs" as pharmacy and technician champions is your first job as quarterback; your second is to ensure they are committed, adopting and progressing as the program is implemented 30 , 60 , 90 days and beyond.

Drive your team to reaching your med sync 90-days post-launch goals — check in weekly and monthly. Set milestones, giving your team insights into how you're tracking and ask for input on what can be done differently to ensure goals are met. A post-90-day goals checklist is included in this guide, and we recommend you review it with your staff on a regular basis.

As the quarterback, you also need to anticipate potential obstacles in your game plan. It is your job to make sure the staff has the infrastructure, training and resources needed to ensure success — remove barriers as they come up so your team has a clear path to success.

Even the best quarterbacks have to make adjustments to plays, so keep your ear to the ground and remember, communication with your teammates is critical to success.



The cheerleader

Everybody needs some motivation when things get difficult! Because change is scary, your staff may need encouragement and motivation to keep the momentum going. It is your job to encourage all staff members to embrace this new way of doing business and to let them know it might not feel natural at first. Repetition and building on momentum is key; we encourage you to come out of the gate swinging and keep momentum building until the new workflow and patient touch points are like second nature. Most importantly, **celebrate wins** along the way — even a simple change like enrolling a patient or making the outbound scheduling call or coaching a patient at pickup should be celebrated!

The therapist

Lend an ear! While we're using this term lightly and you may think we're joking, your staff is going to have moments of feeling uncomfortable, confused and, potentially, resistant. It is your job in this role to listen, show empathy, and try to reach solutions that work for everyone while working toward med sync success. We dig deeper and reference tips to success in this area in Health Mart's "Change Management 101" guide.

The marketer

People deserve to know about a job well done — so shout it from the rooftops! It's your job to help your staff reach the patient enrollment goals by doing your part in the marketing department. We strongly recommend that you market your new medication synchronization services to your patients through in-store promotions as well as any mailers or other promotional materials you do outside of the store. Marketing materials from Health Mart's patient-facing brand of med sync, *SimpleSync*, are available on the Health Mart Marketing Hub. These consumer-tested products will help you let your patients know about the exciting new service your pharmacy now offers to make their lives — and their health — better.

Your marketing doesn't stop at your patients. Additionally, working with key physicians in your market is also important to ensure they are supportive and responsive when medication requests come in or if patients approach them with questions. We have included a fax outreach template as well as suggested talking points to help make these conversations easy and efficient.

Get the word out! Your staff has worked hard, and this is a critical last step to make your efforts worth it.

FAQs and common barriers

Q What are the benefits to providing a medication synchronization program in my pharmacy?

A Med sync represents a fundamental shift away from an on-demand, reactive pharmacy workflow to a more efficient way to manage refill volume. With ever-increasing demands on your pharmacy team's time, med sync helps put you in the driver's seat, moving your pharmacy practice forward as efficiently as possible and allowing you to layer in more and more clinical services. Since patient outcomes are such an integral part of the pharmacy's business — and what patients care about — your pharmacy will stand out for your excellent care.



Med sync can help drive tangible results in the following areas:

OPERATIONAL

- Fill all your med sync scripts on your schedule, rather than on demand when patients walk in
- Optimize ordering, inventory management and cash flow by knowing which drugs to stock and order what you need, when you need it
- Reduce multiple calls from patients and to their prescribers by streamlining refills and pickups or deliveries
- Better integrate medication therapy management (MTM) cases into your workflow, taking advantage of more opportunities during scheduled time with patients

FINANCIAL

- Predicting your prescription needs and appointment schedule in advance allows you to balance and anticipate staffing and inventory, so you have what you need, and no more
- Monthly patient appointments create opportunities to earn fees for Comprehensive Medication Reviews (CMRs) and other clinical services, such as Pharmacy Intervention Program coaching and immunizations

CLINICAL

- Improve your clinical-performance data on key Star Ratings quality measures, such as proportion of days covered (PDC) scores, as a result of more adherent patients
- Scheduled and routine check-ins with patients allow your pharmacy to better identify gaps in care, conduct Comprehensive Medication Reviews and ensure patient outcomes are positive
- Align additional clinical services to the appointment, such as immunizations and screenings, to do more for your patient as an overall destination for wellness

Q Where can I check how my pharmacy is performing after implementing a med sync program?

A There are several resources that can help you track your performance, such as:

1. Monitoring your pharmacy's quality measure data in EQuIPP (e.g., PDC scores)
2. Utilizing your sync technology platform to review patient adherence scores
3. Utilizing reporting features in your pharmacy management system

To track performance for individual patient over time, log patient Refill Days Covered (RDC) scores from your pharmacy technology software on the Med Sync Patient Tracking Document found in the Resources section of the "Med Sync Pharmacist Champion/Facilitator Guide."

Q I'm having trouble getting staff to buy in and engage. What should I tell them?

A The first thing you should do is listen. Ask open-ended questions to uncover your staff's resistance to engaging with the program. Show empathy and understanding when listening. Never discount what your staff says and work with them to find common ground so that a solution can be identified that makes everyone successful. Please refer to the "Change Management 101" guide for additional best practices for managing a team through change.

Q I have new staff members I want trained; where do I start?

A It is very important all current staff members are trained in this program — make sure everyone has taken the "Benefits of Medication Synchronization" and "Implementing Med Sync" courses on Health Mart University, as well as the trainings available from your technology platform. Sharing the "Get In Sync Playbook," which includes a step-by-step guide, is also helpful. You should also leverage the appropriate role-based Med Sync Guide.

Q Will I lose front-end business with fewer patient trips to my pharmacy?

A We understand this concern, but we've found that when you shift your focus from the value of a script and a trip to the value of the patient as a whole, you are more profitable. The dollar amount adherent patients are worth as a whole to your pharmacy tends to be more than the incremental OTC purchases derived from multiple visits. A suggested best practice is to have over-the-counter items ready at the pharmacy, so when the patient comes to pick up their prescriptions at their scheduled time, everything is ready for them. We encourage you to focus on the amount you have to gain by the patient becoming more adherent to their medication as well as other revenue opportunities you can tie into their prescription pickup.

Talking points to share with your staff

Why are we implementing a medication synchronization program?

The world of pharmacy is evolving. It is being driven by a shift from a fee-for-service (or “fee-for-dispensing”) to a “fee-for-outcomes” model. While reimbursements for dispensing prescriptions are decreasing (relative to their cost), other reimbursements are increasing for executing clinical services like adherence coaching, medication therapy management (MTM), the pharmacy intervention program, immunizations, and increased reimbursements for being a top performer.

Our pharmacy continues to operate under the “old” pharmacy financial model and it is time to make some adjustments to our operations in order to create efficiencies that will enable us to remain viable. Med sync is a service that will help our pharmacy adjust to the new industry realities and allow us to continue — and perhaps even improve — to serve our patients.

Once med sync is fully adopted, all of us will see such benefits as: improved workflow, fewer patient status and refill calls, reduction in inventory, more time with patients, more prescriptions sold, and improved patient satisfaction. Med sync helps us identify gaps in care and proactively care for the patient as a whole, and not just react to their prescription needs.

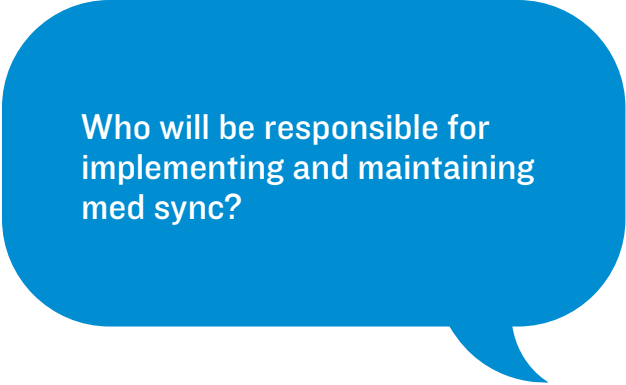
What is med sync?

Medication synchronization is a pharmacy service that promotes a holistic pharmacy-directed patient-care workflow. Under medication synchronization, patients are scheduled to pick up their multiple medications at the same time each month, allowing the pharmacy to be proactive in their approach rather than reactive. When practiced correctly, med sync can improve the financial, operational and clinical performance of the pharmacy.

These benefits are realized by performing three functions:

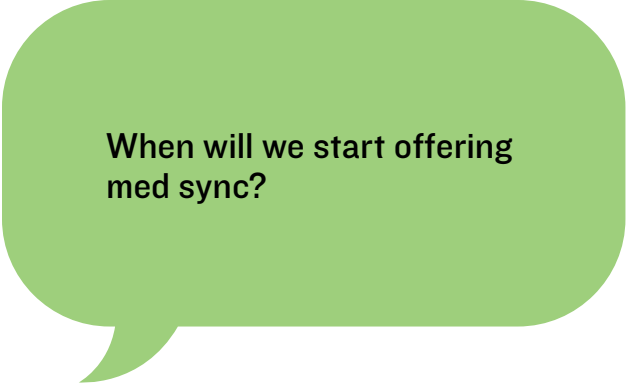
1. Alignment of maintenance meds to fill at the same time, once each month
2. Regular medication reviews paired with a pharmacist-directed counseling session
3. Timely consults with medical providers to address drug-related concerns

Med sync represents a critical and foundational step in the transition from a “reactive” to “proactive” pharmacy care-delivery model.




Who will be responsible for implementing and maintaining med sync?

For us to be successful, we need everyone to contribute. Med sync changes our workflow and in doing so, will impact everyone. It is critical that everyone understand their roles in making this transition.



When will we start offering med sync?

This meeting officially kicks off med sync in our pharmacy. You'll be receiving information specific to your role to help you understand the important part each member of our staff plays in the success of med sync.



How are we implementing this?

We will be following a step-wise approach, in which we become educated on the med sync tool, communicate the offering to our patients and providers, and make operational changes to adjust to this new way of practicing pharmacy. We are going to implement this at a pace that is right for our pharmacy to make sure we are going to be successful. I have appointed members of the staff to be “med sync champions” as an important part of their role. They will be our subject-matter experts on med sync and our technology, and a go-to resource for you to answer questions. But this doesn't mean the implementation relies solely on them — it's going to take our entire team rolling out med sync and making changes to how they approach their function in the pharmacy for us to be truly effective and succeed.

Marketing tools for physicians

Just as it is important to get the word out about your new med sync offering to patients, it is also important to inform key physicians in your market. Physicians can help encourage patients to join the program and are aware of their role in helping to align prescriptions. Please also refer to the “Get In Sync Playbook” where there is a template that can be used to send a medication list when a patient enrolls in med sync.

A sample overview communication to providers follows on the next two pages, and after that follows a suggested Prescriber Outreach Plan.





Dear Provider,

We at _____ Health Mart Pharmacy now offer a medication synchronization (med sync) service for our patients. Med sync is a community pharmacy service that aligns patients' maintenance meds so they are filled at the same time, once each month, creating more pharmacist time to spend with patients answering questions, reviewing medications and delivering behavioral adherence coaching.

Why sync?

This service helps **patients** by:

- Improving medication adherence
- Identifying gaps in drug-therapy-related care
- Improving patient satisfaction by reducing unnecessary trips to the pharmacy

This service also provides benefits to the **provider** by:

- Driving performance in up to 10 drug-therapy-related HEDIS measures
- Reducing administrative burden with fewer refill request from pharmacies and patients

How can you help?

In order for this service to be successful, we would need to establish a communication that allows for timely response to prescription refills and therapeutic adjustment requests. We typically make these requests about five to seven days prior to the patient needing the medication, which would provide us with time to ensure a smooth and seamless patient experience at pickup.

We suggest:

- Introduce 48-hour response times on refills, drug changes, etc.
- Create/continue existing protocol for simple medication changes

Let us know if you have any questions or additional ways we can work together. I can stop by your office to talk about this in greater detail.

Kindest Regards,

Health Mart Pharmacy Owner

Partner with a pharmacy that is in sync!

Our pharmacy is committed to outcomes and wants to do more to help our patients achieve better outcomes for themselves. Medication synchronization (med sync) is a service that provides simplified yet enhanced patient care by coordinating all refills for a single patient on a specific day each month, affording the entire staff more time with patients.

Why sync?

Studies have shown increased adherence as a result of med sync, including:

- Non-adherence for first refills was reduced 90%+ for med sync patients¹
- Med sync patients were three to six times more likely to adhere to their meds²

Med sync can also reduce the frequency of burdensome refill requests between pharmacies and physician offices, reducing administrative costs.

Potential benefits to physician and patients

Physicians

- Reduced operational workload
 - Fewer pharmacy refill requests
- Improved physician-impacted HEDIS quality measures:
 - Pharmacotherapy of COPD
 - High Blood Pressure
 - Persistence of Beta-Blocker Treatment after a Heart Attack
 - Statin Therapy for Patients with Cardiovascular Conditions
 - Statin Therapy for Patients with DM
 - Antidepressant Medication Management
 - Adherence to Antipsychotic Medications for Individuals with Schizophrenia
 - Annual Monitoring for Patients on Persistent Medications
 - Potential Harmful Drug-Disease Interactions in the Elderly
 - Use of High-Risk Medications in the Elderly

Patients

- Improved medication adherence
- Improved patient satisfaction with fewer trips to the pharmacy

REFERENCES

1. National Association of Community Pharmacy, *Assessing the Impact of a Community Pharmacy-Based Medication Synchronization Program On Adherence Rates* (December 2013) accessed at <http://www.ncpanet.org/pdf/survey/2014/ncpa-study-results.pdf>
2. Holdford, D, Inocencio, T. *Appointment Based Model (ABM) Data Analysis Report*. Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy, Jan 2013

Prescriber outreach plan

1. Identify top 5 physicians by script volume

PHYSICIAN NAME	REFILL NURSE	ACCEPTANCE OF PROGRAM (Y/N)	CONTACT DATE

2. Schedule in-person or phone meeting with prescriber and/or refill nurse*

- a. Explain how program works operationally
- b. Explain patient benefits
 - i. Improved satisfaction with reduced visits to pharmacy for prescription pickups and improved drug in-stock condition
 - ii. Improved patient adherence
- c. Explain provider benefits
 - i. Lower administrative burden with fewer faxes and calls for refill requests
 - ii. Positive impact on up to 10 drug-related HEDIS performance measures

3. Ask of prescriber/refill nurse

- a. Collaborate to have timely response to refill request and therapy changes
 - i. 48-hour response time on refill and drug-therapy change request
 - ii. Establish or continue protocols on resolving simple drug-therapy issues
 - iii. Send fax template if not in person

* Bring flyer to leave behind after in-person meeting or fax it to the office if they are unavailable for a meeting (refer to McKesson Marketing Hub for any supplemental materials that can be shared).

Med sync post-launch plan

(0–90 days post-implementation)

The first 90 days after implementing med sync are critical for creating momentum and wins for your pharmacy staff. Repetition is key, so keep the importance of continuing with med sync top of mind each day during these first 90 days. This is especially important during this time as you are asking your staff to push themselves outside their comfort zone, so practicing new workflow and/or patient outreach conversations each day is a must until it becomes second nature.

We encourage you to work with your staff when setting your goals/milestones. Just as important is to celebrate goals as they are met or discuss what might be keeping staff from succeeding along the way. Below is our suggested set of milestones/goals, but please work with your staff to make these your own.

7 DAYS POST-LAUNCH		ENROLLMENT GOAL:
Task	Owner	Status
Staff education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify team members needing training Utilize staff discussion talking points, encourage review of med sync playbook and the role-based guide book Confirm staff is comfortable with pharmacy/program vision as well as 0–90 goals Address concerns and celebrate wins as they happen Share/confirm goals for next seven days 	Med sync sponsor	
Build infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe staff executing med sync workflow and invest in necessary infrastructure to help ensure success, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill-bin for workload balancing Designated “med sync terminal” for patient calls Med sync file for important document storage 	Med sync sponsor and champions	
Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate the patient marketing kit Execute the physician marketing plan Encourage staff to promote program as patients come through pharmacy 	Med sync sponsor and champions	
Clinical execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enroll at least 5% of your patient enrollment goal Update enrollment progress on your med sync scorecard — don’t forget to celebrate progress with your staff! 	Med sync sponsor, champions and facilitators	

14 DAYS POST-LAUNCH

Task	Owner	Status
Check in with staff/continue to build skills/infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask what is working and what is not regarding workflow and patient enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Share best practices, brainstorm across all roles – Refer to tools provided during your implementation meeting • Review tools and talking points that might support staff's success • Share/confirm goals for next 14 days 	Med sync sponsor and champions	
Clinical execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll at least 10% of your patient enrollment goal • Update enrollment progress on your med sync scorecard — celebrate success! 	Med sync sponsor, champions and facilitators	
Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evolve marketing plan to maximize patient and physician awareness • Reward staff for promoting program to patients 	Med sync sponsor and champions	

30 DAYS POST-LAUNCH

Task	Owner	Status
Check in with staff/continue to build skills/infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refill sync days are getting ready to hit for patients first enrolled in the program — ensure all staff are ready for tasks associated with this — review as a group what the game plan is across all roles and responsibilities, and support each other along the way • Suggest using the Patient Tracking Document so that staff can begin to see med sync results • Begin empowering and elevating facilitators into champions • Share/confirm goals for next 30 days 	Med sync sponsor and champions	
Continue building infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As more med sync tasks are layered on before all program efficiencies are realized, make sure staff has the time/resources needed to execute all facets of the program (e.g., patient outreach calls, prescription syncing, and behavioral coaching at pickup) • Provide extra staffing during this transitional phase as needed 	Med sync sponsor	
Clinical execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll at least 30% of your patient enrollment goal • Review data on Customer Tracking Document with staff — celebrate success • Update enrollment progress on your med sync scorecard — celebrate progress with your staff by bringing breakfast or lunch in for your team! • Ensure pharmacists are comfortable delivering coaching sessions to patients — share best practices and support pharmacists with additional resources as needed 	Champions/med sync sponsor	
Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evolve marketing plan to maximize patient and physician awareness, as needed • Reward staff for promoting program to patients 	Med sync sponsor and champions	

60 DAYS POST-LAUNCH

Task	Owner	Status
Check in with staff/continue to build skills/infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull staff together to share challenges and successes to date with med sync • Have pharmacists share how patients reacted to coaching session at prescription pickup • Share results of patient tracking document so that staff can begin to see med sync results — brainstorm how to use data on the sheet to improve patient outcomes • Ask for input/experiences from recently appointed champions • Share/confirm goals for next 30 days 	Med sync sponsor and champions	
Clinical execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll at least 60% of your patient enrollment goal • Review data on customer tracking document; make notes in patient profile as appropriate • Update enrollment progress on your med sync scorecard — celebrate success! • Brainstorm clinical services outside of behavioral coaching that can be layered into patient pickup sessions 	Champions/med sync sponsor	
Marketing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to evolve marketing plan to maximize patient and physician awareness, as needed • Reward staff for promoting program to patients 	Med sync sponsor and champions	

90 DAYS POST-LAUNCH

Task	Owner	Status
Check in with staff/continue to build skills/infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulate and thank staff for completing the first 90 days of med sync and for transforming the pharmacy into a patient-centric model • Review Vision Statement created at the beginning of the process and see how staff thinks they are doing to support this vision (refer to the separate “Change Management IOI” guide about the Vision Statement) • Share results of patient tracking document so that staff can begin to see med sync results — brainstorm how to use data on the sheet to improve patient outcomes • Create goals for next 30 days and beyond with entire staff 	Med sync sponsor	
Clinical execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enroll at least 100% of patient enrollment goal • Review data on customer tracking document • Update enrollment progress on your med sync scorecard — celebrate success! and create a new scorecard for your next phase of the program • Brainstorm with pharmacists and McKesson Performance Advisors how to continue momentum and success of clinical coaching sessions at prescription pickup sessions 	Champions/med sync sponsor	



Questions?

Contact a Health Mart Performance Advisor at (855) HLTH-MRT (855.458.4678) or email HMPPerformance@mckesson.com



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