

**SOS Rx Coalition Meeting
April 2, 2008**

Oral Anticoagulation Project Update

Project Description:

This education campaign targets patients taking oral anticoagulants in the outpatient setting, as well as those who prescribe and dispense these medications. The campaign, formally launched May 31, 2006, informs patients and caregivers about the interaction risks of oral anticoagulants with other medications and substances, and the importance of blood testing and diet.

Educational materials, including summaries of the background research and surveys conducted, are on the campaign website – www.mybloodthinner.org.

The coalition is now interested in increasing dissemination/reach and follow up activity to expand the impact of the campaign. This includes website development, possible pilot study, continuing education (CE), and other activities.

Since the last meeting in September, we have contacted organizations about linking to mybloodthinner.org, updated the website, and, as described below, started developing the CE course.

Online CE Course:

Rationale

The key findings of our physician survey highlighted the areas where physicians and pharmacists could do better in managing patients taking oral anticoagulants. The materials developed for the SOS Rx oral anticoagulation project provide a strong basis for education to health care providers (including physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and physician assistants) about the safe and effective use of oral anticoagulants. By building on the information we have developed, we believe we can provide much needed education and help support providers who are using these necessary, but challenging, medications to manage the health of their patients.

Advisory Group

To guide the development of the CE course, a small advisory group made up of various stakeholders within the SOS Rx Coalition was assembled. The advisory group has met twice and consists of representatives from the following organizations: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, Arizona CERT, Holy Cross Hospital, Thomson Healthcare, University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy & Medical Center, and National Consumers League.

NCL has also met with a representative from the National Institute for Quality Improvement and Education (NCQIE) and a consultant from Lifelong Learning Services, both of whom have provided useful advice about the CE development process. Below is a summary of the discussion and decisions of the advisory group thus far.

Format

This would be an online course, and would be directed to the health care team working with patients on oral anticoagulants. While there are existing CE programs on oral anticoagulants for

specific health care professionals, there are few (if any) that address the entire health care team that works with the patient on safe use of oral anticoagulants. The team approach benefits patients because caring for patients on oral anticoagulants is carried out best when done through a team approach. This health care team could include the following providers: family practitioners, nurses, nurse practitioners, cardiologists, internists, hematologists, neurologists, hospitalists, pharmacists, as well as others.

Content Options

Possible areas for education include:

- Better information on what patients should do when taking oral anticoagulants;
- Basic education on diet, interactions, and side effects;
- Communication with patients – importance of asking patients about problems they are having with their medication, and the need to be accessible to patients;
- Communicating with patients on adverse reactions and actions to take following an adverse reaction;
- Communicating to patients their blood test results, and reminders to test;
- “Translating” blood test goals for patients – explaining results and desired “number;” and
- Providing information to patients – oral counseling and other resources, including pharmacists, nurses, or other health care providers.

Collaboration

We would like to collaborate with health care provider professional groups to develop educational content for the CE course. To develop a framework for the content, we must engage representatives from the targeted health professional groups in the content development from the beginning. Possibilities for collaboration include pharmacy groups through the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) and the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Pharmacy. There are also other health professional groups associated with SOS Rx that could assist with content development. Also consider working with a medical education consultant.

Evaluation

An effective CE course must be performance- based. This CE course will have performance metrics so that providers who take the course will be evaluated afterwards on the improvement in the care of their patients on oral anticoagulants. Evaluation could be anything from simply asking the providers who take the course what they are doing (in terms of their practicing behavior) to something much more specifically measurable, involving evaluating research data.

Funding - There are several options for grants from pharmaceutical companies.

Action Item: Let us know if your organization is willing to work with us on content development or any other aspect of the CE course. We are specifically interested in health professional groups that can assist with content development.

Next Steps: Contact health professional groups to assist in content development. Convene/update advisory group on plan for development of the course, and discuss next steps, including funding.