

**For Immediate Release**

**Walgreens, AllianceRx Walgreens Pharmacy Study of Non-Infused Biologics  
in Rheumatoid Arthritis Treatment Underscores Importance of Medication Adherence**

*Retrospective cohort study compared adherence, healthcare cost and utilization.*

**ORLANDO, Fla., September 20, 2023** – A recent study evaluating the use of non-infused biologics in patients diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) demonstrated that patients who are adherent to their non-infused RA biologic medication are more likely to have lower medical costs, odds of hospitalization and length of stay (LOS). [AllianceRx Walgreens Pharmacy](#), a leading specialty and home delivery pharmacy, and [Walgreens](#), one of the largest drug store chains in the U.S., conducted the [retrospective cohort study](#).

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune and inflammatory disease, in which the immune system attacks healthy cells in the body by mistake, causing inflammation (painful swelling) most commonly in the joints of the hands, wrists and knees.<sup>[1]</sup> In affected joint tissue, the lining of the joint becomes inflamed, causing damage which can lead to chronic pain or deformity.

The [Pharmacy Quality Alliance](#) (PQA) promotes a useful reporting metric of proportion of days covered (PDC) for non-infused biologic medications to treat RA. This metric is known as PDC-RA. The objective of the study was to identify significant associations between this PQA PDC adherence metric and total medical cost, hospitalizations, and LOS for RA patients.

For the study, researchers used both the MarketScan Commercial Claims and Encounters databases, and Supplemental or Coordination of Benefits databases from 2019 - 2020. They examined three types of yearly outcomes derived per patient: summed healthcare costs; any hospitalization within the year; and summed LOS per hospitalization event.

Francis Staskon, PhD, principal analyst of Health Analytics, Research & Reporting at Walgreens, and lead author of the study, says the research found that “adherence to a non-infused RA biologic can lead to lower medical costs, odds of hospitalization, and LOS after controlling for many other influences on these outcomes. In addition, the findings support the PDC-RA methodology presented about calculated adherence rates used for reporting requirements.”

[Renee Baiano, PharmD, CSP](#), clinical program manager for AllianceRx Walgreens Pharmacy and an author of the study, says the research findings underscore the importance of patients remaining adherent to their therapy. She also says specialty-trained pharmacists should take a proactive approach to encourage medication adherence.

“Identifying barriers to adherence and educating patients on the importance of taking their medication can increase the patient’s chance at disease improvement,” says Dr. Baiano. “Whether it’s helping the patient take their medication the right way or notifying their prescriber about a new adverse event, a specialty pharmacist can play a vital role in helping patients manage their condition.”

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/rheumatoid-arthritis.html>

Researchers presented the above findings Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at the [NASP 2023 Annual Meeting & Expo](#) in Grapevine, Texas. Download the poster [PDF](#).

### **About AllianceRx Walgreens Pharmacy**

AllianceRx Walgreens Pharmacy ([AllianceRxWP.com](#)) provides hope and care for better tomorrows to patients with rare diseases and chronic conditions by delivering medications from its specialty and home delivery pharmacies. Our advanced analytical capabilities, pharmacy expertise and technology solutions enable providers, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and health plans to deliver optimal health outcomes. Through personalized care and clinical programs, along with access to the leading number of limited distribution drugs, patients can get back to what matters most. A subsidiary of Walgreen Co., the company holds several national pharmacy accreditations and has team members across the United States.

### **About Walgreens**

Walgreens ([www.walgreens.com](#)) is included in the U.S. Retail Pharmacy and U.S. Healthcare segments of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. (Nasdaq: WBA), an integrated healthcare, pharmacy and retail leader with a 170-year heritage of caring for communities. WBA's purpose is to create more joyful lives through better health. Operating nearly 9,000 retail locations across America, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Walgreens is proud to be a neighborhood health destination serving nearly 10 million customers each day. Walgreens pharmacists play a critical role in the U.S. healthcare system by providing a wide range of pharmacy and healthcare services, including those that drive equitable access to care for the nation's underserved populations. To best meet the needs of customers and patients, Walgreens offers a true omnichannel experience, with fully integrated physical and digital platforms supported by the latest technology to deliver high-quality products and services in communities nationwide.

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