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Vizient Cell, Gene & Specialty Symposium

April 2024

Vizient hosted its inaugural Insight: Cell, Gene & Specialty Symposium, bringing together healthcare providers, manufacturers and payers of high-cost, ultra-specialty pharmaceuticals to discuss the unique challenges of the rapidly expanding market of cell, gene and other advanced therapies. This symposium served to provide a collaborative arena for sharing insights and leading practices from the nation's innovators in the cell, gene and specialty classes.

The three-day meeting began April 8 in Atlanta, GA and was attended by more than 65 providers from some of the most advanced academic medical centers, including Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, Mayo Clinic, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Intermountain Health and University of California. Additionally, 20 suppliers were in attendance. The agenda included six general sessions, 10 presentations split between two tracks – Cell & Gene Therapy and Specialty Pharmacy – as well as a variety of focus groups and expert panels designed to engage and facilitate the sharing of effective practices in these spaces.

Key takeaways

This three-day event resulted in robust discussions on topics critical to the development and delivery of these life-altering therapies. Presentations and panel discussions focused on operational and financial challenges that providers, suppliers and payers must navigate to enable access to these agents, including the following:

- Implementing best practices for managing the fiscal impact and payer coverage decisions
- Managing unique storage and handling logistics
- Addressing the requirements and authorization processes to become a qualified treatment center
- Establishing multidisciplinary teams across health systems that include all operational aspects of delivering cell and gene therapy such as finance, pharmacy, managed care, laboratory, nursing, physician and supply chain teams
- Educating health system C-suite leaders of the potential impacts of cell and gene therapy to generate support and resource allocation
- Ensuring equitable access for all patients

Vizient is committed to partnering and collaborating with providers, payers, and suppliers to continue the development of our cell and gene therapy solutions providing the industry with impactful product and operational support. Our goal is to leverage findings from this conference to expedite the exchange of leading practices and develop innovative business solutions that overcome existing barriers. We actively seek to support the industry with the primary goal of promoting access to patient care.

> "These advancements may ultimately allow us to overcome some of the enduring and problematic public health crises that we face today."
>
> Madeleine McDowell
> Senior Principal, Intelligence, Vizient

Impactful general sessions

Shaping the future of medicine: Drug discovery and the transformative role of cell and gene therapy logistics

Madeleine McDowell, Senior Principal, Intelligence, Vizient

Medicine is undergoing a paradigm shift to address the rise in patient acuity. New and innovative medications will drive measured success for patients with rare diseases and the transition towards broader population health initiatives, such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Addressing equity in building a cell and gene therapy program

Bhavesh Shah, Chief Pharmacy Officer of Hematology Oncology, Boston Medical Center

There are significant barriers to accessing cell and gene therapy including availability for all patient populations and establishing and providing adequate resources required to initiate programs. It is important that these programs collaborate with each other to build access for all populations.

Drugs in the pipeline

Amanda Frick, Senior Clinical Manager, Market Intelligence & Forecasting, Vizient

The investigational pipeline has approximately 250 cell and gene therapy medications in different phases of development. This presentation focused on twenty specialty and cell and gene therapy products that are anticipated to have a clinical and fiscal impact in the next year. These therapies range in cost from $500,000 to $4.5M per dose.

Cell and gene therapy panel discussions

Lessons learned from a qualified treatment center

Yemi Abudu, Director of Pharmacy at Texas Children's Hospital

Russell Findlay, Director for Pharmacy Purchasing & Support Services, University of Utah Health

To deliver cell and gene therapy to patients, health systems must align with key divisions prior to becoming a qualified treatment center. This panel discussion provided conversation on how medical, pharmacy, operations, supply chain and financial departments can work effectively and efficiently with each other.

Finance and payer strategies for cell and gene therapy

Garrett Crothers, Director Pharmacy Revenue Cycle, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

John McLean, Associate Vice President, Managed Care & Payor Relations, UPHS Penn Medicine

Lynette Rhodes, Chief Health Policy Officer, Georgia Department of Community Health

Richard Toner, Division Chair Reimbursement & Pricing, Mayo Clinic

Cell and gene therapies are now the world's most expensive medications. This finance focused panel discussion provided an overview of high-cost medication drug approval processes and their impact on customary pricing, contracting and payment of gene therapies.

Health systems' operational challenges for cell and gene therapy

Scott Freeswick, Vice President, Chief Pharmacy Officer, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Steve Pate, Deputy Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Senior Director, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Ryan Roux, Vice President of Pharmacy, MD Anderson Cancer Center

Cell and gene therapy can be subdivided into chimeric antigen receptor-T (CAR-T) cells, bispecific products, and gene therapy medications - each requiring a different level of operational processes. This panel discussed how institutions are operationally managing these medications and what remains a challenge in the industry today.

Specialty pharmacy presentations

Challenges of LDD access

Jennifer Carter, System Director, Specialty Pharmacy, Medical University of South Carolina

Kanika Chandra, Director of Systemwide Pharmacy Specialty Operations, University of California

Mike James, Associate Chief Pharmacy Officer, UAB Medicine

Gaining access to limited distribution drugs is challenging for numerous specialty pharmacies. This panel session expressed the importance of educating providers on supply chain access and continuing to elevate awareness of drugs in the pipeline.

Specialty pharmacy quality improvement: Optimizing clinical and financial outcomes for patients receiving oral chemotherapy

Jeni Hayes, Senior Clinical Manager, Market Intelligence & Forecasting, Vizient

Brooke Looney, Clinical Pharmacist Specialist, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

There are a variety of frameworks for completing quality improvement projects within a health system. Vanderbilt Specialty Pharmacy has implemented several initiatives that have driven financial and clinical improvements for patients being treated with oral chemotherapy.

Keys to successful relationships with payers including data reports and agreements

Lisa Blanchette, Senior Director of Infusion, Retail & Specialty Pharmacy, Novant Health

Brian Davis, Senior Director, Pharmacy Strategy & Partnerships, University of California Office of the President

Tim Hinkley, Director of Specialty, Froedtert Health

This panel discussion provided an overview of challenges with payers surrounding data reports and agreements at their respective institutions and how they overcame those challenges to forge successful relationships.

Meeting resources

- Overview video
- Conference website

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As the nation’s largest member-driven health care performance improvement company, Vizient provides solutions and services that empower health care providers to deliver high-value care by aligning cost, quality and market performance. With analytics, advisory services and a robust sourcing portfolio, we help members improve patient outcomes and lower costs.

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