

Finding flexibility: Five important features of pharmacy eBV solutions

When it comes to pharmacy eBV, is less sometimes more? Focus on flexibility to find the solution that works best for your product.

While pharmacy electronic benefit verification (eBV) solutions are an essential tool for manufacturers, some solutions can be overly complex. While some might be over-engineered, others can require too much patient information that actually slows down the process.

Could manufacturers benefit from a nimbler eBV solution? Flexibility makes for leaner, faster eBV systems, and yet agility can be an underrated quality when comparing options. Even though manufacturers should consider a tool's full scope, it's best to focus on the basics first.

"Pharmacy eBV solutions can unlock rich information with a high level of detail, from how to obtain and submit prior authorizations (PA) to extensive explanations of benefits (EOB)," says Elizabeth Gibson, Product Director at AmerisourceBergen. "But before you get to any of that, most prescribers start out needing a snapshot of three things: eligibility, drug cost, and barriers to coverage (e.g., PA). If you can get those basic insights instantly, you can build on the platform with more advanced capabilities."

When looking for solutions that can quickly flex up from simple to sophisticated, consider these factors:

01 Bias for action

eBV solutions should give users an easy way to activate next steps. With pharmacy eBV, that comes down to one question: What needs to happen to get this script filled and the patient on therapy?

"With any solution, you should have the information you need in order to take that next critical step," says Myra Reinhardt, Vice President of Product Innovation and Analytics at Amerisource Bergen. "Getting information that's instantaneous and specific to a certain drug, for a certain patient, at a certain point in time, is essential."

02 User-specific insights

Solutions should be able to differentiate between what's needed for providers to take the next step vs. insights to inform manufacturers' strategic program decisions. Being able to solve for each user's needs helps optimize automation rates, keeping things flexible and simple for all.

03 Manual and electronic input synthesis

Flexible eBV solutions provide as much information as possible with minimal complexity. That requires platforms to identify and combine multiple inputs on the back end for a seamless front end.

"The objective should be for the system to synthesize inputs across many different sources, from electronic transactions to digital assistants," Gibson says.

Sometimes, this data gathering may also involve manual support when electronic data is not available. But with manual effort or not, optimal eBV solutions will blend all inputs for a quick and lean user experience.

"There may be instances where there's a new-to-market product that does not have information available just yet," Gibson adds. "This might require that manual process. And then, once a product has become more established, that's when you'd bring in those electronic solutions to meet needs more efficiently."

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"When more robust information is desired, incorporating AI and digital assistants into the mix enables us to provide a richer pharmacy benefit verification experience. And you can scale this experience as demand changes. It can really be as simple as having real-time pharmacy benefits (RTPB) enabled and then, as needs evolve, going down a chain of features such as predictive AI and digital assistance to layer in more insights."

– Myra Reinhardt, Vice President
of Product Innovation at Lash Group
at Amerisource Bergen

04 Automation

Automation technologies like digital assistants and artificial intelligence (AI) can streamline pharmacy eBV solutions by delivering more information with a lighter lift. This creates flexibility and scalability that can expand capabilities by user need.

05 Program interoperability

Flexible eBV solutions aim for action, but what happens if it is determined that action cannot go forward—as in, patients don't have adequate treatment coverage?

These cases underscore the importance of program interoperability, such as integrating copay assistance or patient assistance programs (PAP) into the core eBV platform.

"It's ideal to put all applicable programs together so that you can get to that next actionable step," Reinhardt says. "For example, based on the benefits verification, the technology can transition into determining eligibility for a copay or PAP program and start services in real-time." Ultimately, this last factor is among the most important because it flexibly adjusts and engages services along the path to therapy for a seamless patient experience.

"The goal for any eBV should be to not just know the next steps—but also to get there," Reinhardt adds. "Maybe that's giving a patient their copay card right away, or connecting them to the PAP. Whatever that is, it completes the loop so that people can move forward. With the breadth and depth of solutions we have at AmerisourceBergen, we can absolutely do that."

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