

# MAKING SENSE OF CANADA'S SPECIALTY PHARMACEUTICALS MARKET

## What are specialty pharmaceuticals?

Specialty pharmaceuticals are medicines that treat chronic, serious, and rare diseases. These medicines often target specific biochemical pathways, which makes them especially difficult to develop, refine, and test. Distribution also poses a challenge as these products often require special handling, such as end-to-end refrigeration. Additionally, specialty pharmaceuticals generally have a high cost.

Specialty drugs also present challenges to patients. Some are delivered by infusion, requiring patients to travel to infusion clinics. In other cases, patients may need to learn to self-inject the product. And before they get started, they may require a series of lab tests to protect them against unwanted side effects. Finally, most patients can't pay for these drugs without third-party coverage, which may require complex documentation to secure.

For all these reasons, patients need help. That's where patient support programs come in.

## What are patient support programs?

With specialty pharmaceuticals, the steps required to initiate and continue treatment are far more complex than with traditional medications. Patient support programs (PSPs) help patients move through these steps.

A PSP may perform some or all of the following services, among others:

- **Educate the patient** on the disease and the drug – including how and when to take the medication.
- **Liase** with the patient's insurer to obtain reimbursement.
- **Set up** a treatment schedule and reminds patients of appointments.
- **Provide treatment updates** to physicians.
- **Deliver medication** to its destination (e.g. pharmacy, clinic, hospital, or patient's home).

Some pharmaceutical companies use third-party organizations, called specialty service providers, to run part or all of their PSP services.

This is not to say that a pharma company can purchase a PSP "off the shelf" from these providers. Every PSP is unique – because every drug is unique. An effective PSP reflects the specific nature of the medication and the needs of the patients who need it.

**20Sense** helps pharmaceutical manufacturers and specialty service providers more effectively enter and compete in Canada's complex specialty pharmaceuticals market by optimizing data, insights and programs that deliver better outcomes for patients and value for payers.

Are you looking to make better sense of the specialty pharmaceuticals market?

Contact us at: