Treating serious and chronic conditions such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis is challenging. Specialty medications can be an essential part of the treatment plan, but they present challenges of their own to the healthcare system. They are expensive: The average specialty drug costs nearly $79,000 per patient per year\(^1\) and specialty drug spending as a whole now accounts for nearly half of prescription drug spending in the U.S.\(^2\) And medications for complex conditions often require special handling, management and patient education. Prior authorization requirements are the norm, causing administrative delays.

So what happens when all this complexity reaches specialty pharmacists? Surescripts commissioned a survey of 414 specialty pharmacists to understand the challenges and bright spots in their work getting critical medications to patients.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Filling specialty prescriptions takes extra time and effort.
- Administrative work steals time from patient care.
- Prior authorization tops the list of stressors and delays.
- More complete and streamlined communications could make a major impact.
SUCCESS AS A SPECIALTY PHARMACIST MEANS…

“Being able to provide exceptional patient care without having to compromise between patient-facing tasks and administrative tasks.”

| Hospital-based specialty pharmacist |
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SETTING UP SPECIALTY PHARMACISTS & THEIR PATIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Overwhelmingly, the ability to touch patients’ lives is what gives meaning to specialty pharmacists’ work. Helping patients receive their therapies, consulting with patients and their caregivers, and providing patient education are by far the activities respondents report enjoying the most.

However, these committed care providers are often burdened by the administrative tasks required to fulfill specialty prescriptions. The data in this survey both illuminates the barriers they face and points the way toward some solutions.

For instance, we can focus on getting pharmacists all the information they need at the time of prescribing, so they don’t have to make phone calls and track down details after the fact. We can make prior authorization swift, electronic and even automated. We can reduce paperwork and, instead, deliver comprehensive data that’s pulled directly from patients’ electronic health records.

When we replace manual work with an accurate, electronic workflow, patients get essential therapies sooner and specialty pharmacists have more time to do what matters most to them: help patients.
ABOUT THE SURVEY

Surescripts partnered with Survata to administer a 33-question online survey to 414 active specialty pharmacists between February 19 and February 25, 2020. Survata calculates a 2% margin of error for this study at a 95% confidence level. Figures have been rounded to the nearest percentage point.