Survey Results of Contemporary US Health Plan Policies – Affordable Care Act (ACA), Digital Technologies, Value Based Contracting (VBC) and Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER)

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BACKGROUND
- Health plan management is rapidly evolving and tools are being incorporated into practice management for administering health care. This poster covers 4 Critical areas of contemporary interest:
  - The ACA (affordable care act):
    - Has been under fire with payers making business decisions regarding continuation or elimination of ACA coverage
    - Deductibles and coverage vary by plan and payer
    - Has led payers to speculate about the Trump administration’s impact on access, quality and costs
  - Digital Technologies, including web and PDA (personal digital assistant) applications continue to grow within patient management, and various services. Budget impacts are expected as these technologies evolve and are adapted
  - Value Based Contracting (VBC) is evolving for various disease and service categories with growth predicted in this technique
  - Cost Effectiveness Research (CER) utilization has grown in volume and application as better evidence has evolved

OBJECTIVES
- To gain a better understanding of health plan management and contemporary tools

METHODS
- An online, interactive survey was developed with 69 questions and topics included:
  - Material or financial incentives were not offered for completion of the survey
  - Participation in affordable care act (ACA) plans and expected family deductibles
  - Predictions on the impact of the Trump administration regarding healthcare access, quality and costs
  - The growing use and availability of digital technologies and their budget impact
  - Use and expectations for Value Based Contracting (VBC)
  - Cost Effectiveness Research (CER) uptake and use
  - Access to information and use of Evidence Based Medicine (EBM)
  - Invitations to participate were sent to Medical and Pharmacy Directors working with US health plans, PBMs, and insurers from the TPG-NPRT database in November 2017
  - Survey invitations were received and reviewed by 247 managed care decision makers

RESULTS
- Most advisors expect their plans to continue to offer ACA-based plans in the future (Figure 1) with family deductibles shown in Figure 2
- The majority of advisors believe Trump administration policies (Figure 3) will:
  - Decrease healthcare access
  - Increase healthcare costs
  - Either decrease or have no change on healthcare quality or prescription drug access
  - In addition to covering traditional medical care and prescription drugs, health plans cover a variety of non-medical therapies (Figure 4)
  - The impact of Digital Health Technologies on health plan budgets is expected to raise costs (22%), be budget neutral (60%) and decrease costs (18%), some categories where Digital Technologies will be used are shown in Figure 5 and some commonly used digital applications are shown in Figure 6

CONCLUSIONS
- With the rapidly shifting health care marketplace, politics and regulation are affecting payers’ willingness to participate in the ACA
- Health plan coverage continues to cover most therapies. Medical Marijuana was mentioned as an alternative medicine consideration and will grow as FDA approved therapies enter the marketplace
- Digital Health tools offer more information and insights into care and are generally expected to be budget neutral
- Value based contracting is growing but slower than expected, 45% of respondents do expect this to increase
- CER and EBM continues as a promising tool but the quality of information still demands improvement

CITATION
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