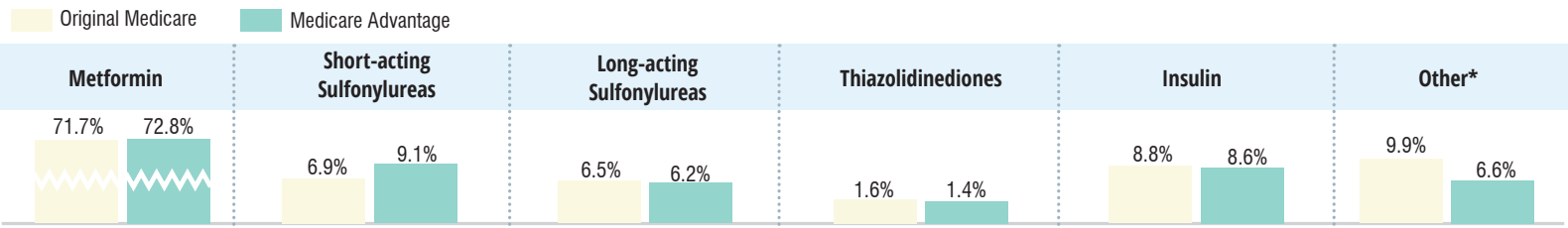


Use of Pricy New Diabetes Drugs Is Higher Among Traditional Medicare Enrollees

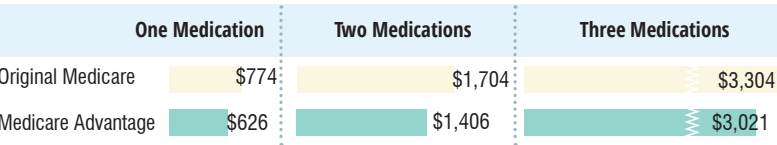
by Carina Belles

Compared to Medicare Advantage members, seniors enrolled in Original Medicare are more likely to be prescribed costly new diabetes medications, according to a recent study in the American Journal of Managed Care. While metformin remains the standard of care for both populations, researchers found that overall use of newer medications, such as glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) receptor agonists, was 5.1% higher among Original Medicare beneficiaries, which likely contributed to higher total costs and out-of-pocket spending for that cohort. Despite their high cost, GLP-1s are picking up steam on Medicare formularies, according to data from MMIT, AIS Health’s parent company. Among the most advantaged drugs are Novo Nordisk’s Victoza 2-Pak and Ozempic, both injectables, plus Rybelsus, the first GLP-1 available as an oral tablet. Eli Lilly’s Trulicity (a weekly injectable) and Sanofi’s Soliqua 100/33 (a daily injectable) also hold strong formulary placement. Utilization management practices such as prior authorization and step therapy are rare — just 5% of Medicare lives require step therapy to access a GLP-1 receptor agonist, and 6% require any form of prior authorization.

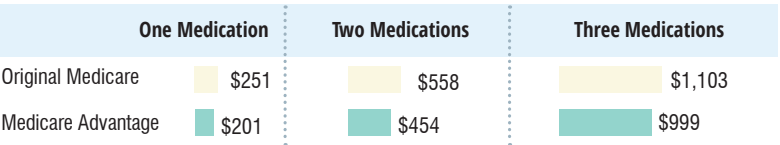
Choice of Initial Diabetes Prescription, Original Medicare vs. Medicare Advantage



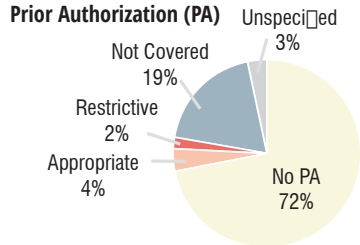
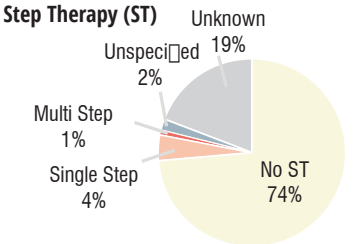
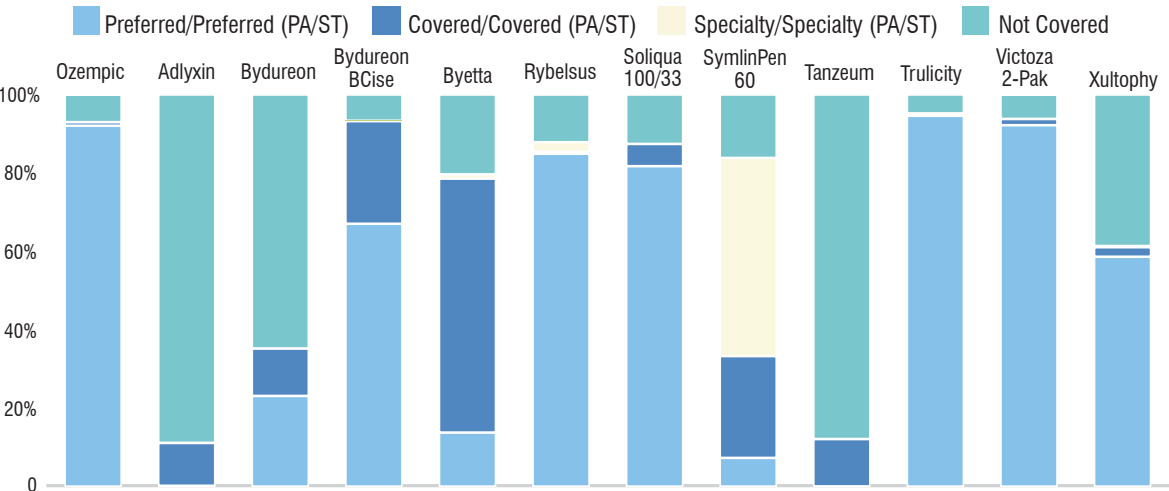
Mean Annual Total Cost per Diabetes Patient



Mean Annual Out-of-Pocket Spending Among Diabetes Patients



Current Market Access to GLP-1 Receptor Agonists Under Medicare Formularies



NOTES: Other* category includes glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists, dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitors, sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors, meglitinides and D-phenylalanine derivatives. Access that requires prior authorization and/or step therapy is represented by the abbreviation (PA/ST). Under the pharmacy benefit, there are 47.5 million lives covered on Medicare formularies.

SOURCES: Managed Markets Insight & Technology, LLC database as of March 2021; “Use of Diabetes Medications in Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage,” The American Journal of Managed Care, vol. 17, no. 3, 2021. Visit <https://bit.ly/3rmi34i>.