



Script Your Future
Summary of Campaign Survey Research
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INTRODUCTION

Nearly three out of four Americans report that they do not always take their medications as directed. This poor adherence leads to serious health consequences and billions of dollars annually in avoidable healthcare costs. To address this problem, the National Consumers League (NCL) launched *Script Your Future*, the pioneering national campaign to raise awareness of the importance of taking medications as directed.

Research conducted for the *Script Your Future* campaign since its launch in 2011 shows that there are clear benefits and opportunities linked to increased communication between people who take prescription medications and their health care professionals, as well as the use of tools that make it easier to adhere to medications.

Bringing together more than 135 stakeholder organizations, *Script Your Future* has aimed to help people with chronic conditions—cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease (asthma and COPD), and diabetes—along with their families, caregivers, and health care professionals, to talk more clearly and effectively with each other about adherence. *Script Your Future*'s national outreach and targeted efforts in six pilot cities have reached millions of Americans through hundreds of local events, traditional and social media, educational programs by campaign stakeholders, and the campaign website, www.ScriptYourFuture.org.

To measure the impact of the campaign over time, NCL commissioned Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (GQR) to conduct surveys of patients in the campaign's pilot cities before the campaign launched, at its midpoint in 2013 and again in 2015.¹ The *Script Your Future* pilot cities are Baltimore, Md.; Birmingham, Ala.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Providence, RI; Raleigh, NC; and Sacramento, Calif.

The surveys in the six pilot cities—from 2011 to the present—show that, while Americans possess a strong awareness and acceptance of the importance of taking medications exactly as prescribed, there are clear benefits and opportunities linked to increased communication between people who take prescription medicines and health care professionals, and use of tools that make it easier to adhere to prescription medicines.

Efforts around communications have clearly been beneficial in the *Script Your Future* campaign. The link between communication and good adherence emerged as important early on in the campaign and continues to be crucial; those who report taking medications better than a year ago also are more likely to experience increased communications by health care professionals over the same time period, while those who report a worse job taking medications say they had seen decreased communications. The increase in communications from pharmacists has been particularly notable. Continuing to work to encourage communications between patients and health care professionals will be an important piece in continuing to promote awareness around adherence to medication.

Importantly, those taking medicines in the pilot cities, where the campaign had specific outreach efforts, are significantly more likely than those in a control market to say they are taking their medicines better than in the previous year.

The use of tools that increase convenience and communication can also help to continue to raise awareness and increase adherence to prescribed medications. Americans react positively to a range of tools aimed at making it easier to adhere to medications.

¹ Please see the Appendix for further details on methodology

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Some key findings from the research include:

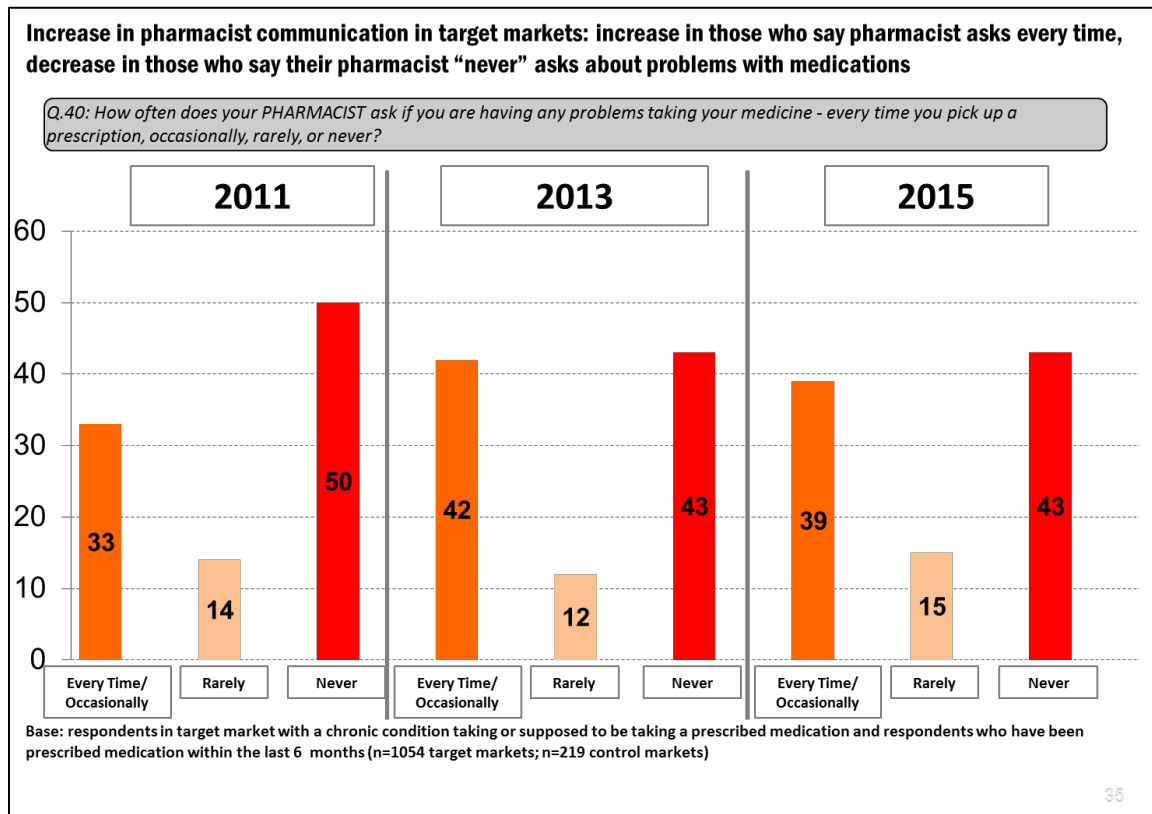
- **Americans who take prescription medications report a strong awareness and acceptance of the importance of adhering to their medications.** A majority of Americans taking medications (55 percent) strongly agree with the statement “I am convinced that it is important for me to take my medicine.”
- **Self-reported levels of adherence to prescription medications have remained consistently high since 2011.** More than 9-out-of-10 people who take prescription medicines (93 percent) now say that they “always” or “almost always” take their medicines exactly as instructed by their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. This is consistent with the high levels of adherence reported in both 2011 and 2013.
- **Nearly 1-out-of-5 people taking medications in the target markets say they are taking their medicines better than they were a year ago, significantly higher than in the control market.** In the control market, just 12 percent of those taking medicines say that they were doing a better job taking their medicine as directed compared to a year ago; in the target markets, 19 percent of patients note that they are doing a better job with their medicines.
- **Better communication between patients and health care professionals connects to better adherence. (Figure 1)** Those Americans who report taking medications better than a year ago also are more likely to have experienced increased communications with health care professionals during that the same time period. Those who say that they are doing a worse job taking medications report a decrease in communications with health care professionals.

■ **Figure 1: Connection between Managing Medicines and Communications**

| Compared to a year ago, how good of a job are you doing taking your medicine as directed by your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional ... | Among those reporting <i>increased</i> communications | Among those reporting the <i>same amount of</i> communications | Among those reporting <i>decreased</i> communications |
|---|---|--|---|
| % Better than a year ago | 41 | 15 | 26 |
| % About the same as a year ago | 57 | 82 | 48 |
| % Worse than a year ago | 2 | 1 | 24 |

- **Americans taking prescription medicines report an increase in communications with pharmacists in particular. (Figure 2)** Thirty-nine percent of those who take medications report that pharmacists are now more likely to ask about problems with medications “every time” or “occasionally.” This represents a 6-point increase compared to the campaign’s inception. Importantly, the number of individuals in the target markets who say their pharmacist “never” asks about problems with medications has also decreased since 2011, from 50 percent to 43 percent.

■ **Figure 2: Increase in Communications with Pharmacists**

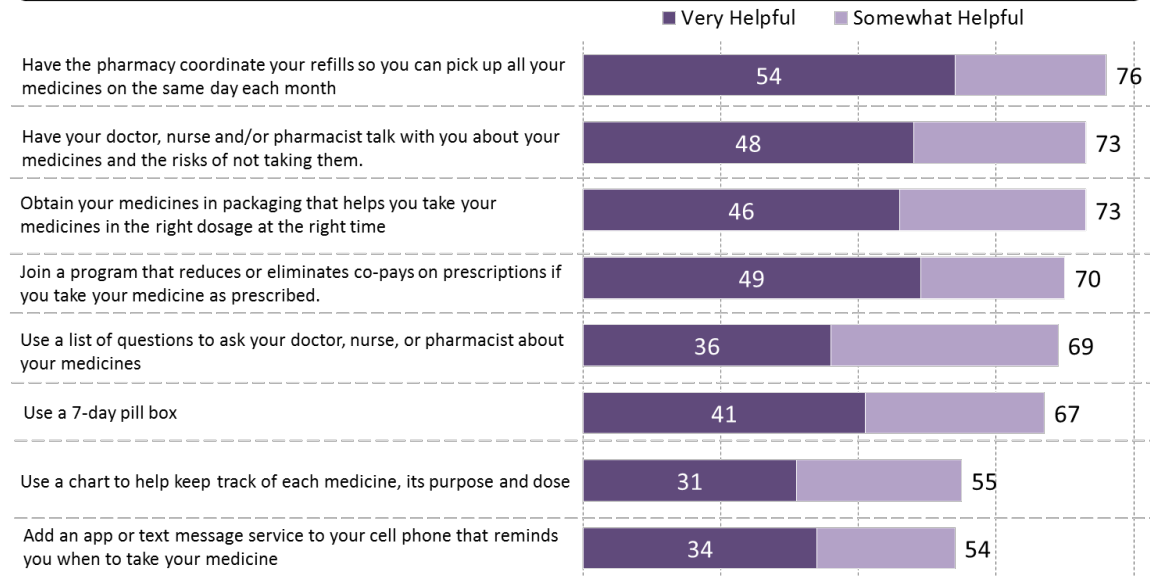


- **Americans respond positively to tools that can help them adhere to medications, particularly those that increase convenience of getting and using medicines and ease of communications. (Figure 3)** Majorities of American adults see each of the tools offered as helpful in helping people take medicine correctly. In particular, they see the ability to have pharmacies coordinate refills so they can all be picked up at the same time and packaging that organizes medications in appropriate doses as helpful ways to make taking prescription medicines more convenient. They also respond favorably to tools to ease and improve communications, including having conversations with health care professionals, and bringing question lists to discuss with doctors, nurses, and pharmacists. Importantly, there is greater enthusiasm for the various tools among minority populations, and caregivers are more likely to recognize communications and convenience as helpful tools for adherence. (Figure 4)

■ **Figure 3: Tools to Help People Take Medicines Correctly**

Americans view tools to increase convenience and improve communications with health care professionals as very helpful

Q.41-48: A lot of people need help reminding them when to take their medicine and how to take their medicine correctly. I am going to read you a list of tools some people use or things that can be done to help people take their medicine. Thinking specifically about yourself, please tell me whether each of these would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, not very helpful or not at all helpful.



Base: all respondents in target markets (n=1800)

■ **Figure 4: Caregivers Find Tools Very Helpful**

Caregivers more likely to recognize communication and convenience as helpful tools for adherence.

Q.41-47: A lot of people need help reminding them when to take their medicine and how to take their medicine correctly. I am going to read you a list of tools some people use or things that can be done to help people take their medicine. Thinking specifically about yourself, please tell me whether each of these would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, not very helpful or not at all helpful.

| % Responding "Helpful" | Caregivers (n=330) | Not a Caregiver (n=1452) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Have the pharmacy coordinate your refills so you can pick up all your medicines on the same day each month | 84% | 75% |
| Write a list of questions to ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your medicines | 77% | 68% |
| Obtain your medicines in packaging that helps you take your medicines in the right dosage at the right time | 77% | 73% |
| Join a program that reduces or eliminates co-pays on prescriptions if you take your medicine as prescribed | 76% | 70% |
| Have your doctor, nurse and/or pharmacist talk with you about your medicines and the risks of not taking them | 75% | 72% |
| Use a 7-day pill box | 70% | 66% |
| Use a chart to help keep track of each medicine, its purpose and dose | 63% | 54% |
| Add an app or text message service to your cell phone that reminds you when to take your medicine. | 54% | 54% |

Base: all respondents in target markets (n=1800)

Since the *Script Your Future* campaign launched in 2011, it has reached 12 million patients, distributed more than 1.2 million wallet cards for managing multiple medications (in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Hmong), provided direct counseling to 60,000 Americans, and held more than 1,000 community health events across the country. The Medication Adherence Student Team Challenge has engaged thousands of students from various health professions, as they disseminated campaign materials to millions in their communities nationwide.

The *Script Your Future* campaign represents the interests of consumers and patients by providing materials in numerous languages through partnerships with pharmacies, hospitals, medical offices and clinics, and health insurance plans. It has hosted community events and health fairs across the country; partnered with local officials, and evaluated medication adherence awareness through research. The centerpiece of the first-of-its-kind, multi-year campaign is a website, www.ScriptYourFuture.org, which provides tools to support patient efforts to adhere to their prescribed medicine. Tools include free text message reminders, videos, sample questions, medication lists and charts to keep track of medicines, and fact sheets on common chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, and high blood pressure.

The campaign activities in the six pilot cities: Baltimore, Birmingham, Cincinnati, Providence, Raleigh and Sacramento have exceeded expectations and expanded beyond each city's geographic limits. Each pilot city affiliate has grown into its own independent coalition of local partners with volunteers who plan activities, outreach, and interventions, staff health fairs, media events, and presentations, and bring the campaign messages directly to patients and health care professionals at the local level. In 2015 the pilot city coalitions integrated into their local communities and expanded to state-wide initiatives. For more information, visit www.ScriptYourFuture.org.

APPENDIX

Survey Methodology

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, Inc. designed and administered this telephone survey conducted by professional interviewers. The survey reached 2,200 adults, 18 years or older; 66 percent of the interviews were conducted on landline telephones and 34 percent of the interviews were conducted by cell phone.

Approximately 300 interviews were conducted in each of 6 target markets: Baltimore, MD; Birmingham, AL; Cincinnati, OH; Providence, RI; Raleigh-Durham, NC; and Sacramento, CA. An additional 400 interviews were conducted in the Columbus, OH media market as a control. The 2015 results are based on and compared to similar surveys completed in the same media markets in May 2011 and again in October 2013.

The survey was conducted May 19 – 31, 2015. The data were weighted by gender, age, and ethnicity, within each individual media market to ensure an accurate reflection of the population.

The target markets (n=1800) have a margin of error of +/- 2.31 percentage points. Results within each individual market (n=300) have a +/- 5.66 percentage point margin of error; results within the control market (n=400) have a +/- 4.90 percentage point margin of error.

Subgroups within the target market universe are subject to larger margins of error based on their sample sizes. For the population of respondents with a chronic condition and who are taking or supposed to be taking medication (n=1,054), the margin of error is +/- 3.02 percentage points.

About *Script Your Future*

Script Your Future is a campaign of the National Consumers League (NCL), a private, non-profit membership organization founded in 1899. Our mission is to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad. The National Consumers League serves consumers across the country by providing government, businesses and other organizations with the consumer's perspective on a range of concerns – including health care and medication information. As an advocacy organization, NCL is working to educate consumers and key health stakeholders on the importance of taking medication as directed. For more information about this campaign, visit www.ScriptYourFuture.org, and for more information on our other areas of focus, please visit www.nclnet.org.