Cardinal Health Makes It Easier For Community Pharmacies To Help Patients Access, Improve Compliance With Specialty Medications

SEATTLE, Aug. 8, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- Cardinal Health today launched the Specialty Pharmacy Alliance, a new suite of services that make it easier for community pharmacies to improve their patients' access to and compliance with specialty medications, which usually require specialized handling, dispensing, administration and patient counseling services.

These medications are often high-cost and high-touch, and the patients who take them often need a great deal of support managing both the clinical and financial complexities of their specialty medication regimens.

Manufacturers of many specialty drugs — particularly those with relatively small patient populations — are increasingly implementing 'limited distribution' programs, which specify that a specialty medication can only be dispensed by a small network of specialty pharmacies, which have demonstrated capabilities in providing complex patient care, nationwide. Doing so minimizes the variability and cost of care, and makes it easier for manufacturers to collect patient intake and compliance data that is critical to tracking medication efficacy.

The Cardinal Health Specialty Pharmacy Alliance creates a cost-effective way for community pharmacies to provide their patients with access to the growing number of specialty medications. Community pharmacies can also utilize the Cardinal Health Specialty Pharmacy Alliance to provide their patients with access to the many support services required by specialty medications, while continuing to fill as many traditional prescriptions as possible at the local store level.

"Over the next five years, sales of specialty drugs that are used to treat complex illnesses ranging from cancer and AIDS to hepatitis C and multiple sclerosis are expected to grow by at least 17 percent annually," said Ray Rede, vice president, Managed Care Relations, Community Specialty Pharmacy Network (CSPN). "As early as 2015, specialty drugs are expected to dominate the top 10 dispensed drug rankings. Given these projected growth rates, it's critically important that community pharmacists have access to resources that can help them serve the specialty medication needs of their patients."

Specialty Pharmacy Alliance accomplishes that goal by leveraging Cardinal Health's state-of-the-art Specialty Pharmacy, OncoSource Rx, which is located in Maryland, and accredited by URAC. Staffed by certified pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to support patient needs 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, 365 days-a-year, OncoSource Rx offers a broad range of patient-centric services. These services, available to any retail pharmacy in the United States, are designed to improve patient compliance with specialty drug regimens and to help patients better manage the clinical and financial complexities of these medications. This team of specialty drug experts can:

- **Manage prior authorization and co-pay assistance** — to help patients navigate the often complicated process of being approved by their pharmacy benefits manager (PBM) or medical benefit plan to receive a specific medication. OncoSource Rx can also help patients access financial resources to assist them with co-pays and other related financial issues.
- **Dispense specialty medications and adjudicate related claims** — when a specialty medication is available only through a limited distribution network and can't be filled at a retail pharmacy, OncoSource Rx can dispense the prescription, adjudicate the claim and mail the medication to the patient.
- **Help retail pharmacies fulfill as many patient prescriptions as possible, at the local level** — when the benefits investigation process indicates that a specialty medication can be dispensed by a retail pharmacy, OncoSource Rx will notify the community pharmacy and inform the patient that the prescription can be picked up there.
- **Provide individualized patient care** — including patient training on how to self-administer medications, how to manage complex medication adherence guidelines and how to manage related side effects.
- **Work with the patient, PBM and the prescribing physician to order and process medication refills.**

"Specialty Pharmacy Alliance aims to enhance the relationship between patients and their community pharmacies," said Jon Giacomin, president of U.S. Pharmaceutical Distribution for Cardinal Health’s Pharmaceutical Segment. "Our goal is to make it easier for retail pharmacies to provide their patients with convenient access to specialty medications and related support, while also reinforcing their role as their community's most accessible, most trusted local health care resource."

**About the Cardinal Health Retail Business Conference (RBC)**
The Cardinal Health Retail Business Conference (RBC), held August 7-10 in Seattle, provides independent pharmacies and pharmacy franchise owners with the opportunity to network with and learn from thousands of their peers from across the nation,
while gaining new insights to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their businesses. The annual event provides independent pharmacy owners, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other pharmacy industry professionals across the United States with access to pharmaceutical manufacturers, buying opportunities, continuing education sessions and programs to help pharmacists reduce costs and improve patient care and efficiency. For more information, visit www.CardinalHealth.com/RBC.

About Cardinal Health
Headquartered in Dublin, Ohio, Cardinal Health, Inc. (NYSE: CAH) is a $101 billion health care services company that improves the cost-effectiveness of health care. As the business behind health care, Cardinal Health helps pharmacies, hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, clinical laboratories and physician offices focus on patient care while reducing costs, enhancing efficiency and improving quality. Cardinal Health is an essential link in the health care supply chain, providing pharmaceuticals and medical products and services to more than 100,000 locations each day and is also the industry-leading direct-to-home medical supplies distributor. The company is a leading manufacturer of medical and surgical products, including gloves, surgical apparel and fluid management products. In addition, the company operates the nation's largest network of radiopharmacies that dispense products to aid in the early diagnosis and treatment of disease. Ranked #19 on the Fortune 500, Cardinal Health employs 34,000 people worldwide. More information about the company may be found at www.cardinalhealth.com and @CardinalHealth on Twitter.

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