

Providing Proactive Care for Patients Taking Oral Oncolytics to Minimize Adverse Reactions and Optimize Adherence

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Introduction

- The increased use of oral oncolytics for the treatment of cancer allows patients the benefits of improved ease of administration, potential for better tolerance, and convenience of self-treating at home rather than traditional infusions at a cancer treatment center.
- With the use of oral oncolytics comes the challenges associated with patient adherence. The issue of **noncompliance in patient's taking oral chemotherapy are as high as 50%**. Nonadherence to cancer therapy is associated with poor health outcomes, increased healthcare costs, and decreased overall survival.

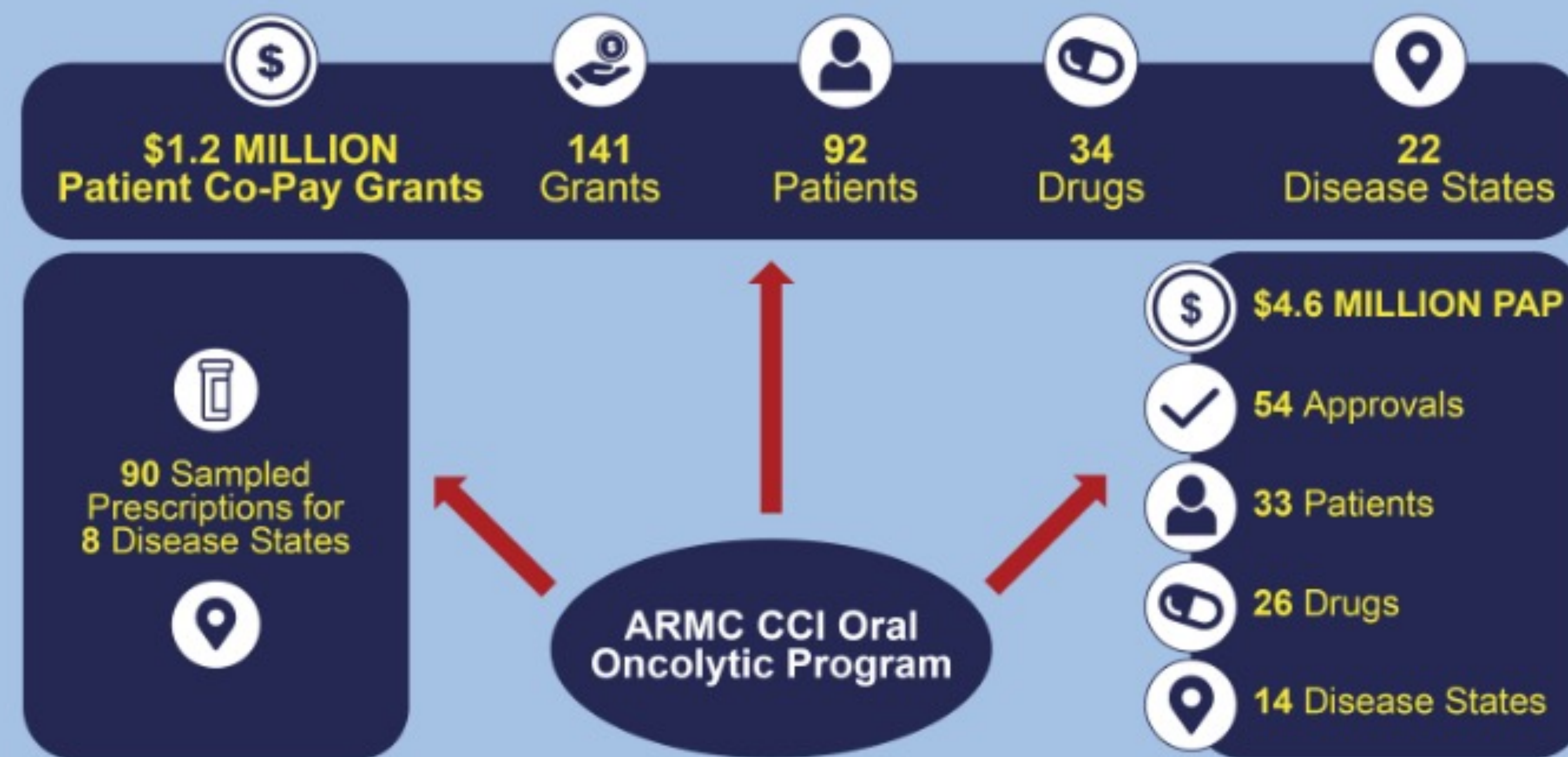
Purpose

In an effort to optimize patient adherence and minimize adverse reactions, the AtlantiCare Cancer Care Institute initiated a program with an Integrated Oral Oncology Specialty Pharmacist to manage patients taking oral oncolytics. Through utilization of our Institutionally Licensed AtlantiCare HealthPlex Pharmacy to fill these medications and provide home delivery to patients, our goal is to provide a comprehensive service with patient education and follow up.

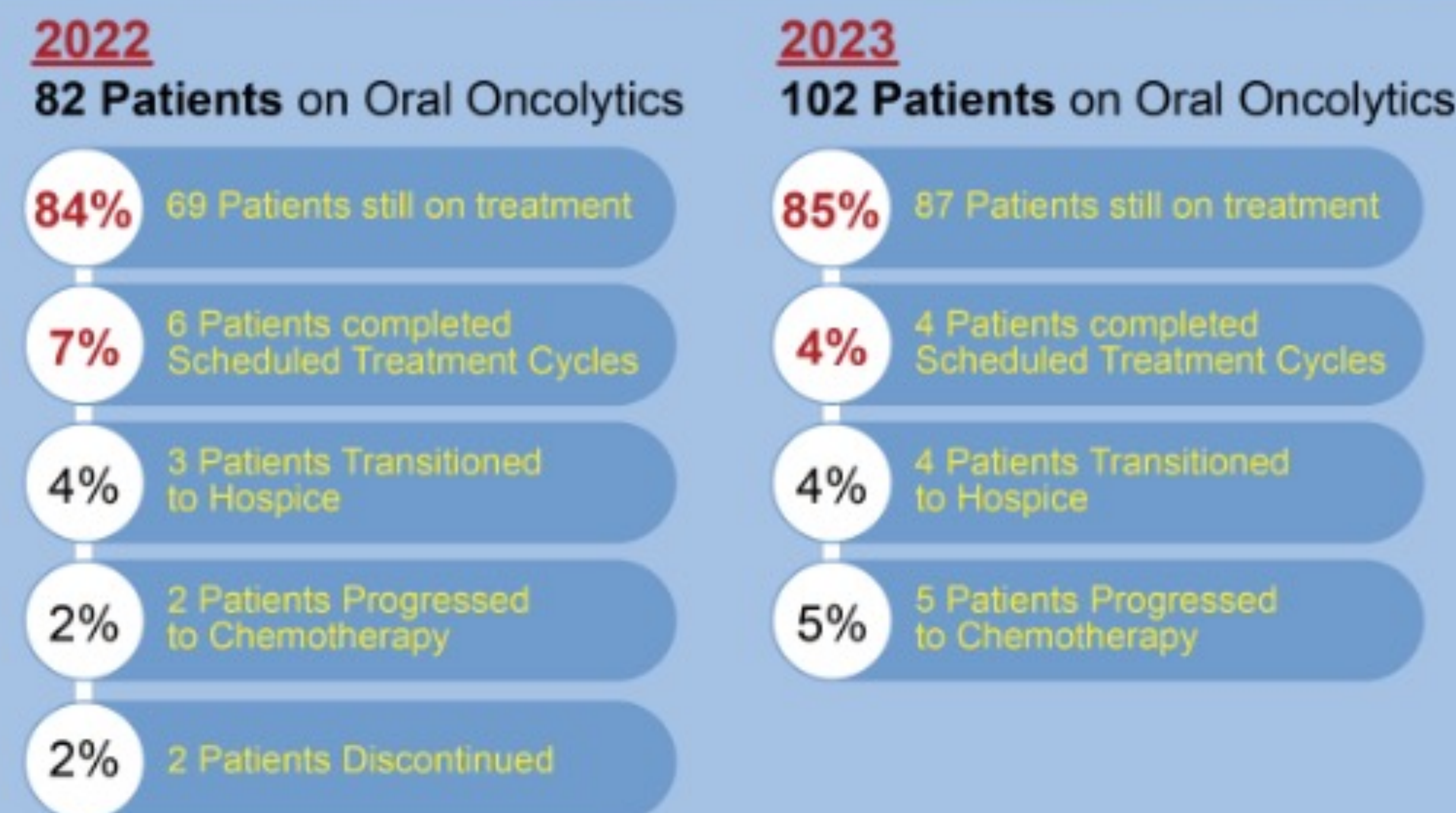
Methods

- Patients on a specialty oncology medication and utilizing our AtlantiCare Specialty Pharmacy were assessed from all of 2022 as well as those from January to September 2023.
- Monthly patient calls were performed by Specialty Pharmacy Technician to follow up and schedule home delivery of refills.
- Patient's adherence and response to medication were also monitored through regularly scheduled follow up appointments, patient imaging, and monitoring of relevant tumor biomarkers.

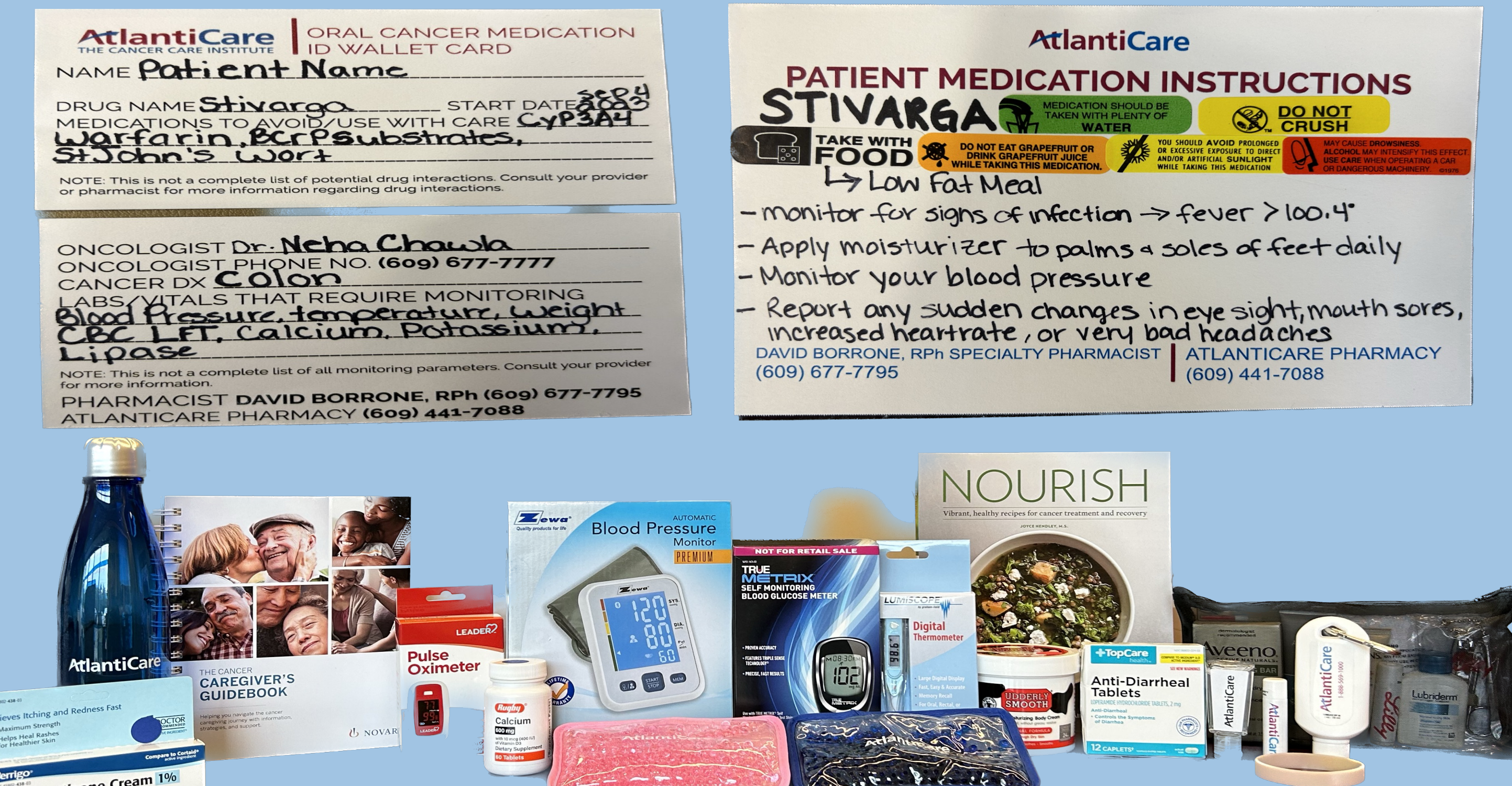
Figure 1: ARMC Oral Oncolytic Program Benefits



Results



Net profits for our specialty pharmacy are on pace to exceed 4 times budget projection.



Discussion

- Barriers contributing to non-adherence of oral oncolytics included delays in starting treatment, high cost of medication, minimal patient education and adverse reactions. By working alongside Oncologists, Radiation Oncologists, APNs, and nurses, an integrated pharmacist can help address and overcome these barriers by providing a proactive approach to patient care rather than a reactive approach. Providing patient education and tools to manage adverse reactions, monitor critical vitals, prevent drug interactions, and reinforce directions for proper medication dosing can enhance the patient's knowledge about their medication. This strengthens their confidence to self-monitor, manage and report adverse reactions.
- With an integrated pharmacist, same day prior authorization approvals allow for most patients to start treatment the day after the medication is prescribed. When delays in insurance approvals or patient financial assistance occur, many patients can be bridged with voucher cards or sample medication. (**Figure 1**)
- The pharmacist can significantly reduce costs to patients through copay grants, copay reduction cards, and Manufacturer Patient Assistance Programs (PAP). The PAPs can be utilized to assure that underinsured, uninsured, and undocumented patients can receive their medications at no charge through manufacturer's assistance. (**Figure 1**)
- Patients are provided with a "Welcome Kit" that is customized for the medication being taken and any pre-existing conditions. These kits are utilized to help prevent, minimize and treat adverse reactions. Our patient aids are provided to reinforce directions for proper medication dosing, necessary precautions, and help prevent missed or doubling of doses. Our ID cards also provide information to other providers which will help minimize drug interactions and monitor relevant labs and vitals. All patients on oral oncolytics are provided with personalized ID Cards, Fridge Magnets, NCODA OCE Sheets, as well as Pill Trackers and Pill Boxes when appropriate.