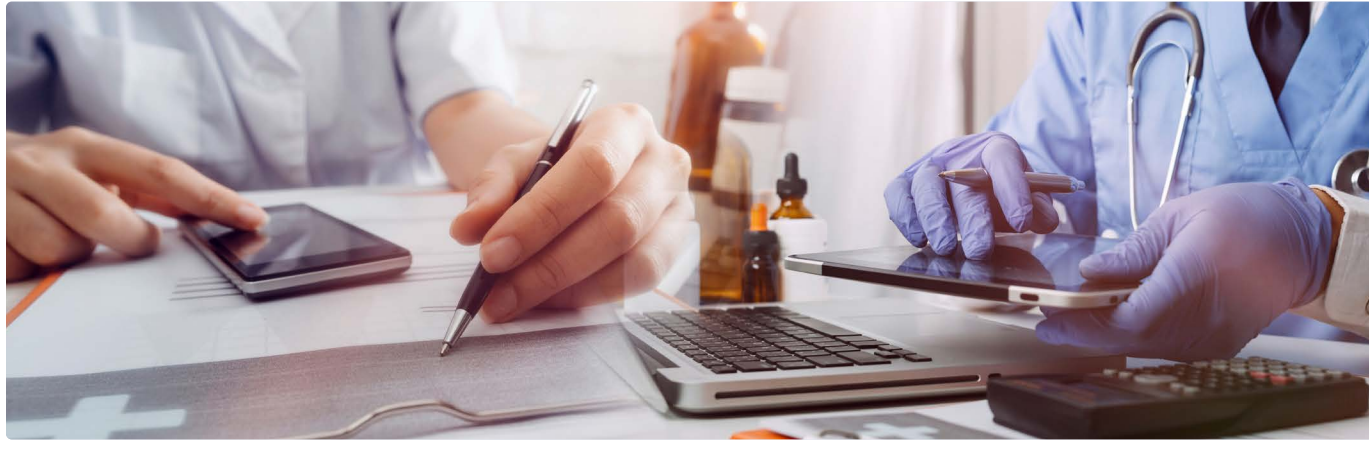




Infusion Therapy Site of Care Optimization: Quality & Economics

SOC Selection and why this is still a big issue

 **AscellaHealth**
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Industry analysts predict a [7.0%](#) year-on-year medical cost trend in 2024 in both Individual and Group markets, a notable increase from previous years. The uptick is largely being attributed to the rapidly escalating costs associated with specialty drugs which are predicted to continue to grow at double digit rates.

From health plans to self-insured employers and pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) -- there is increased pressure to better address the cost of infusion therapies. The expense of infusion therapy varies depending upon the type and dosage of medication, ranging from [\\$200 to \\$1,000](#) or higher per treatment with a significant percentage of patients requiring ongoing treatments on a weekly or monthly basis.

What is a Biologic or Specialty Product?

[Biologic medications](#) and [specialty products](#) often involve administration through an intravenous needle or catheter, while others are administered via alternate routes of administration, such as intramuscular, epidural and self-injectable means. These products include a wide range of treatments such as vaccines, blood and blood components, allergenics, somatic cells, gene therapy, tissues and recombinant therapeutic proteins. They are derived from natural sources (humans, animals and microorganisms, etc.) and are created using various biotechnological methods. Biological products often represent the cutting-edge of biomedical research and, in time, may offer the most effective means to treat a variety of medical illnesses and conditions that presently have no other treatments available.

A year's worth of infusion therapy treatment can range from several thousand to tens of thousands of dollars. For example, the annual cost of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) infusion therapy in a hospital setting routinely costs payers between [\\$36,000 to \\$47,000](#).

As payers seek to take back control of their pharmacy and medical spend, Site of Care (SOC) optimization is an opportunity to capture savings.

While alternative SOC options were first introduced in the 1980's, there are increased pressures in 2024 for cost-containment at every level of healthcare delivery. Coupled with advances in the clinical administration of the therapies, new technologies, and increased demand for quality improvements, there are now multiple opportunities for SOC optimization. For individuals requiring long-term therapy, inpatient care is not only tremendously expensive (\$6 billion annually nationwide), but also prevents the individual from resuming a normal lifestyle and work activities.

There is a cascade of specialty drug launches expected throughout 2024, adding to the massive market. SOC optimization can unlock greater value by enabling patients to receive specialty infusion medication allowing for more responsive care and saving payers on overall costs.

Working with providers to transition patients from high-cost environments like large hospitals with inpatient and outpatient facilities to more economical settings, such as physician's in-office infusion suites or stand-alone Infusion Centers, proves to be an advantageous approach. Alternate sites of care not only offer cost savings but also deliver a more comfortable care environment and higher-quality care with flexible scheduling, aligning seamlessly with the preferences of both patients and payers.

At AscellaHealth, we put patients at the center of everything we do, and this has led us to emphasize the importance of optimizing SOC in our offerings to enhance access to more convenient, quality-focused settings, increase patient engagement and compliance rates, improve clinical outcomes and lower costs. For example, our professional team has leveraged their extensive industry knowledge and expertise to introduce a proprietary Home Infusion Pharmacy Network offering payers and patients a less intrusive and more cost-effective option for infusion therapy. This nationally recognized solution is acclaimed for effectively reducing costs without compromising quality of care for the administration of specialty medications.

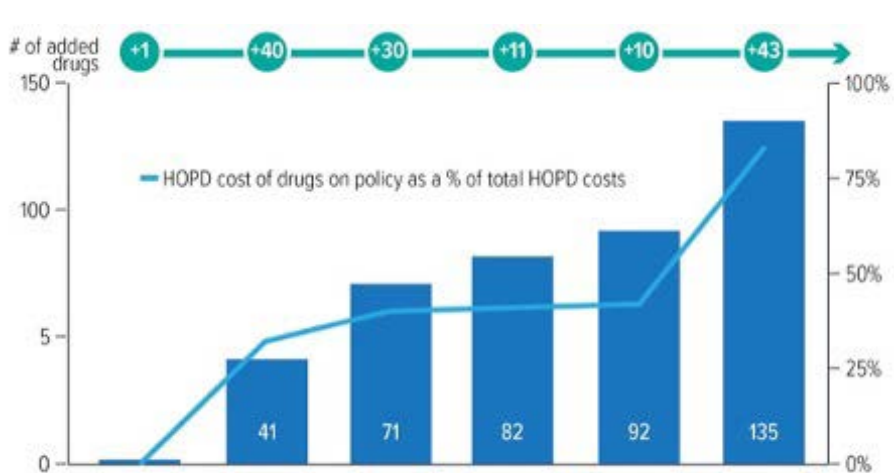
Home infusion therapy has been shown to be highly effective in improving patient outcomes. One [study](#) found that, compared to medical setting infusion patients, home infusion patients were no more likely to have adverse drug events or side effects. What's more, clinical outcomes were as good if not better. For example, home infusion patients with hemophilia have a 40% reduction in the likelihood of hospitalization for bleeding complications. Patients also overwhelmingly preferred home infusion and reported greater physical and mental well-being, as well as less disruption to daily life and reduction in burden for caregivers. In addition to better patient outcomes, home infusion costs were significantly lower than medical setting infusion costs, with savings of between \$1,928 and \$2,974 per treatment course.

Cost Reduction

For payers, it will come as no surprise to learn that the exact same therapies, administered using the same method, can be more than two-to-three times more expensive in the hospital setting vs. a stand-alone infusion center. Industry sources report that hospital outpatient department (HOPD) infusions cost on average [70% more](#) than a physician's office for the same infusion.

Large payers are growing their SOC Optimization Programs. At Cigna, for example, only one infusible drug was on its SOC medical policy at the start of 2017. By 2022, that number grew to 135, including 26 oncology and 109 non-oncology agents.

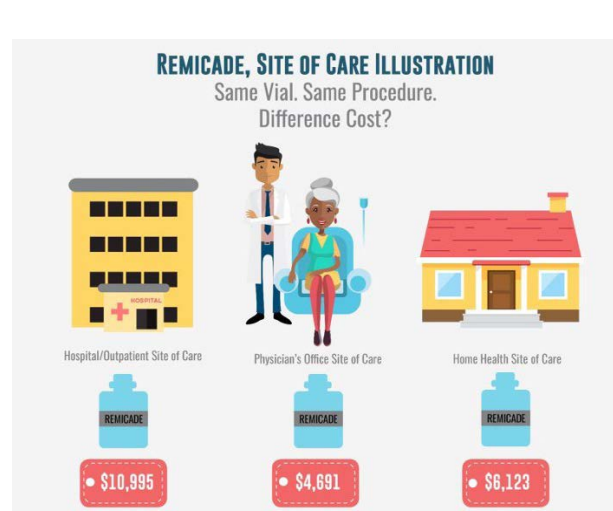
The chart below demonstrates the increasing number of drugs added to Cigna's SOC medical policy:



Source: [Site-of-Care Shock Looms for Infusion Services \(specialtypharmacycontinuum.com\)](#)

Real-World Cost Savings

See this cost comparison for [Remicade](#), a specialty drug which targets a specific protein in the body's immune system to help control inflammation. Remicade can reduce signs and symptoms, induce and maintain remission, promote intestinal healing and reduce or stop the need for steroids.



Source: National Infusion Center Association. [Site of Care Optimization - National Infusion Center Association](#)

Benefits of AscellaHealth's SOC Optimization

With the overwhelming evidence of success, several health plans, self-insured companies and other payers have begun working with AscellaHealth to quickly implement and scale their own SOC Optimization Programs and have found significant value in applying a high level of expertise to the management of specialty drugs.

The AscellaHealth Home Infusion Pharmacy Network reflects:

Expertise in Specialty Conditions & Rare Disease:

Many specialty products treating patients with chronic, complex conditions have intricate routes of administration. AscellaHealth hand-selects each partner as a disease state site of excellence to ensure they meet the specific clinical demands, deliver high-quality care and provide patient flexibility and convenience for the best possible outcomes.

Dedication to Quality of Care:

Collectively, the care sites contribute to a higher quality of life by improving patient access to care, reducing time away from work or school and fostering independence for patients living under otherwise rigid medical parameters.

Efficient Clinical and Commercial Operations:

On-demand, rapid orchestration – sometimes within 48 hours – is crucial to ensuring timely treatment, given the potential disruptions to delivery timelines due to patient-specific issues.

Prioritizing Patient Safety:

Care sites play a pivotal role in ensuring patient safety during the first 30 days post-infusion as well as for long-term monitoring to assess long-term durability of the treatment. AscellaHealth's patient engagement tools are essential to patient safety. Communicating with the care coordination and personalized support teams is easy and convenient with comprehensive, innovative and cutting-edge tools, optimizing care management. For example, expert call centers can seamlessly engage patients, break down barriers to communication and ensure optimal therapeutic outcomes. Automated workflow ensures accuracy, speed-to-fulfillment and initiation of treatment. Capabilities also include mail delivery of products to home, doctor's office or other location, with safe handling, secure packaging and timely delivery; provide side effects management; ensure adherence and refill reminders; provide late-to-refill notifications and ensure compliance and adherence to treatment.

Accreditation Excellence:

All AscellaHealth's SOC partners are accredited and licensed in one or multiple states. Furthermore, our network Pharmacies are accredited by one of many accrediting organizations (AOs) including The Joint Commission, Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC), Utilization Review Accreditation Commission (URAC) and more.

For further information, visit www.ascellahealth.com or contact businessdevelopment@ascellahealth.com