



HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL SPECIALTY PHARMACY

A guide for health systems looking to improve medication access, strengthen patient care, and build sustainable specialty pharmacy programs.

The Cost of Fragmented Medication Access

Picture This

A patient within your health system has a complex condition requiring a high-cost specialty medication. The prescription is sent to an external pharmacy, where it requires prior authorization. The request is sent back to the clinic, processed, and returned again.

Weeks pass and communication gaps occur. The patient is unaware that their medication is ready and treatment is delayed.

The Result

A negative experience for the patient and missed opportunities for the health system.

A Better Approach

Health systems that build internal specialty pharmacy programs can take control of the entire medication access and fulfillment process. This improves care coordination, accelerates treatment, and creates new revenue opportunities.



Aligning Care Delivery with Performance

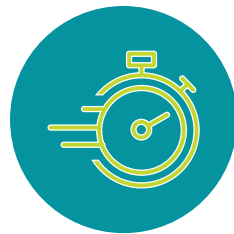
Building a specialty pharmacy may seem complex. However, with the right strategy, it can deliver meaningful clinical and financial impact. In this guide, we'll outline the key components, considerations, and steps to help you build a successful program.

A Well-Built Specialty Pharmacy:



Delivers Holistic Patient Care

Specialty pharmacy programs coordinate the full continuum of care, from diagnosis through therapy management and prescription fulfillment.



Accelerates Time to Treatment

Managing medication access internally reduces delays tied to prior authorizations, benefit investigations, and external handoffs.



Improves Clinic Efficiency

Centralized support reduces administrative burden, allowing clinical staff to focus more time on patient care.



Drives Financial Performance

Capturing specialty prescription volume internally creates new revenue opportunities while improving cost oversight.

Core Components of a Specialty Pharmacy Program

Specialty medications require advanced clinical support, logistics, and operational alignment. Successful programs typically include:

➤ High-Cost Specialty Medications

While representing a small portion of prescriptions, specialty drugs account for a significant share of overall drug spend, creating both cost and revenue opportunities.

➤ Medication Access & Affordability Support

Front-end services such as benefit investigations, financial assistance, and prior authorization support help patients start therapy faster.

➤ Clinical Pharmacist Management

Specialized pharmacists provide disease-specific expertise, patient counseling, and ongoing therapy monitoring.

➤ Advanced Logistics & Delivery

Home delivery and temperature-controlled shipping ensure patients receive medications reliably, regardless of location.

➤ Accreditation

Accreditation from organizations such as URAC, ACHC, or The Joint Commission is often required for network participation.

➤ Coordinated Care Across Providers

Strong collaboration between pharmacists and care teams ensures continuity and better outcomes.

Five Key Questions Before You Launch

Before launching a program, healthcare leaders should evaluate several key strategic and operational considerations:

? What Staffing Resources Are Required?

Programs typically require fulfillment pharmacists, technicians, clinical pharmacists, and medication access teams, along with strategies for supporting multiple locations.

? Which Accreditation Standards Will You Pursue?

URAC is widely recognized, though many organizations pursue dual accreditation with ACHC or The Joint Commission.

? How Will Prior Authorization Support Be Managed?

Centralized teams can streamline workflows, reduce administrative burden, and improve speed to therapy.

? How Will the Program Align with 340B?

A structured compliance and optimization strategy helps extend resources for vulnerable populations.

? How Will Infusion Services Be Coordinated?

Programs must align with infusion services and adapt to evolving payer site-of-care requirements.

A Real-World Example: Bringing Specialty Pharmacy In-House

A children's hospital in the southern United States faced a common challenge: specialty prescriptions were being filled externally, creating delays and limiting care coordination.

The Goal

Improve access, strengthen care team collaboration, and enhance the patient experience.

The Approach

Visante partnered with the organization to build an integrated specialty pharmacy program focused on:

- Strategic planning and operational design
- Integration with clinical workflows
- Medication access support (prior authorizations + financial assistance)
- Education for providers, staff, and patient families

The Impact

- Faster access to specialty medications
- Improved prescription capture
- Stronger care team coordination
- A more seamless experience for patients and families



Tailoring Services to Patient Needs

Specialty pharmacy programs are most effective when designed around the populations they serve. Beyond core dispensing services, many programs offer:

Core Services



**Benefit
Investigation**



**Care
Coordination**



**Therapy
Management**



**Clinical
Collaboration**

Expanded Patient Support



**Patient Advocacy
and Care
Coordination**



**Clinical Education
and Medication
Counseling**



**Financial
Assistance
Navigation**



**Flexible
Medication Delivery
Options**



**Targeted
Interventions by
Disease State**

Programs that align services to patient needs often see stronger engagement, better adherence, and improved outcomes.

A Phased Approach to Implementation

Successful programs often start small and scale over time:



Measuring Success

Track performance across key areas:

Operational Metrics

- Prescription turnaround time
- On-time delivery rate
- Dispensing accuracy

Prior Authorization Metrics

- Completion rate
- Approval rate
- Turnaround time

Patient Metrics

- Satisfaction
- Medication adherence
- Quality of life

Financial Metrics

- Net income
- Drug spend
- Labor costs

Redefining What's Possible in Medication Access

Building a specialty pharmacy program requires alignment across clinical care, operations, and strategy, but the impact can be significant. With the right approach, health systems can improve patient outcomes, streamline access, and unlock new financial opportunities. Visante works alongside health systems to design and implement specialty pharmacy programs that deliver long-term value.



Let's Talk

Connect with our team at solutions@visante.com or **(866) 388-7583** to explore how we can support your specialty pharmacy strategy.

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