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Managed Oncology Service

Medicare Advantage Plans: Oncology Rx Management, Contracting, and Manufacturer Engagement

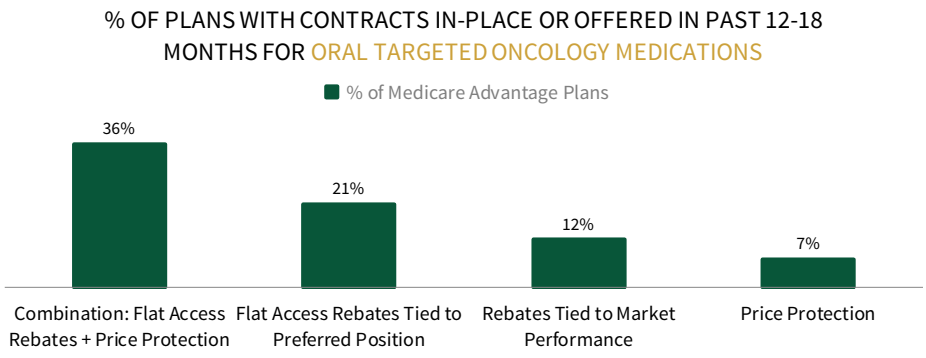
Shifting Medicare drug pricing policies and tighter oncology utilization management are creating new challenges and opportunities for pharmaceutical manufacturers seeking to maintain competitive access within Medicare Advantage. HIRC's report, Medicare Advantage Plans: Oncology Medication Management, Contracting, and Manufacturer Engagement, examines management approaches, the contracting environment, and best-in-class manufacturer support in oncology. The report addresses the following questions:

- How are MA plans responding to the Inflation Reduction Act's Part D benefit design changes in the context of oncology drug management? How have published Maximum Fair Prices (MFPs) impacted the oncology medication contracting landscape?
- What is the status of MA plans' utilization management tactics across oncology medication types?
- What is the status of oncology preferred drug lists (PDL) and clinical pathway adoption across nineteen cancer types?
- How are plans managing oncology medication distribution (e.g., preferred specialty pharmacy, white bagging, site of care management)?
- Which manufacturers stand out as best in Medicare Advantage plan engagement to support their oncology portfolios?

Key Finding: Medicare Advantage plans' top priorities for controlling oncology medication costs include tighter utilization management and enhanced Part B management, with increased emphasis on prior authorization, step therapy, and preferred sites of care.

Contracting Environment for Oral Targeted Cancer Therapies

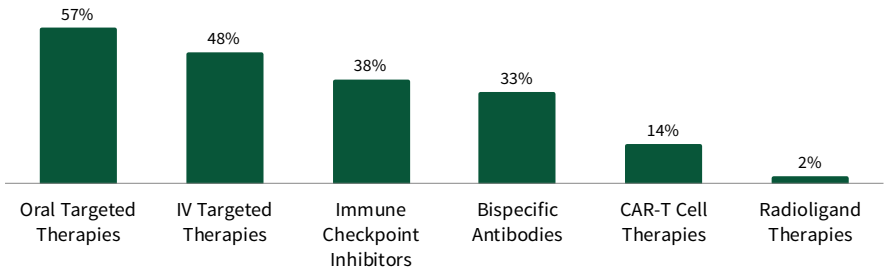
Medicare Advantage plan respondents indicate that combination contracts incorporating flat access rebates and price protection are most common contracting approach for oral targeted oncology therapies. The full report examines contracting approaches and most common discount amounts offered across oncology biosimilars and brand originators, oral and IV targeted therapies, CAR-T cell therapies, immune checkpoint inhibitors, bispecific antibodies, and radioligand therapies.



Oral and IV Targeted Therapies Lead Oncology Preferred Drug List Adoption Across MA Plans

Among surveyed Medicare Advantage plans, 57% report preferred oral targeted therapies in 2026, followed by 48% with preferred IV targeted therapies, 38% with preferred immune checkpoint inhibitors, and 33% with preferred bispecific antibodies.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS:
ADOPTION OF ONCOLOGY PREFERRED DRUG LISTS, 2026



The full report examines the status of preferred products across 19 cancer types, as well as the uptake of oncology biosimilars, and utilization management tactics used to promote preferred products.

Pfizer Oncology and AstraZeneca Recognized as Leading Oncology Partners by Medicare Advantage Plans

Medicare Advantage plan decision-makers nominated leading manufacturers across three oncology engagement categories: *Partner of Choice in Oncology*, *Best-in-Class Programs/Resources*, and *Most Willing to Contract* for medications covered under Medicare Part D and Part B. Pfizer Oncology and AstraZeneca are consistently among the leaders nominated across best-in-class categories. The full report provides additional insights into manufacturer support offerings as well as the factors driving best-in-class nominations.

TOP MANUFACTURERS IN ONCOLOGY ENGAGEMENT FOR MA PLANS
Ranked by Number of Nominations in Each Category

Overall Partner of Choice	Best-in-Class Programs/Resources	Most Willing to Contract
• Pfizer Oncology • AstraZeneca* • Merck Oncology*	• AstraZeneca* • Bristol Myers Squibb* • Pfizer Oncology	• Pfizer Oncology • Amgen • AstraZeneca* • Merck Oncology*

*Indicates a Tie

Research Methodology and Report Availability

In August/September HIRC surveyed 42 pharmacy and medical directors from national, regional, and BCBS plans representing 23 million MA lives. Online surveys and follow-up telephone interviews were used to gather information. The complete report, *Medicare Advantage Plans: Oncology Medication Management, Contracting, and Manufacturer Engagement*, is available now to HIRC's Managed Oncology subscribers at www.hirc.com.

The Managed Oncology Service monitors managed care trends related to oncology medication management and contracting, and reviews market issues in oncology medication distribution and reimbursement across key provider and specialty pharmacy channels. The service benchmarks oncology medication pharmaceutical manufacturers across nineteen high profile cancer types. For subscription information, please contact:

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