



Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy Convenes Experts to Discuss Biosimilar Launch Issues

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) has convened a group of health care thought leaders from across the country to discuss issues surrounding the marketplace readiness, acceptance and utilization of biosimilars.

The June 10-11 AMCP Partnership Forum, "Biosimilars: Ready, Set, Launch," will explore how managed care pharmacy can work with other key stakeholders to ensure a smooth launch of biosimilars for patients, providers and payers alike. Participants, including decision-makers from health plans, industry and the nonprofit sector, will examine how well prepared health plans are for the arrival of biosimilars, and offer recommendations for AMCP-developed training programs and resources to pave the way for their rapid uptake.

"We are at a unique moment in history," said AMCP CEO Edith A. Rosato, RPh, IOM. "Rarely has the health care sector witnessed the introduction of a completely new class of therapeutic products. The arrival of biosimilars – much like the introduction of generic drugs decades ago – will provide patients and providers with safe, effective and more affordable therapeutic alternatives for treating some of the most pernicious chronic diseases."

The event is sponsored by AbbVie Inc., Amgen Inc., Apotex Inc, Boehringer Ingelheim, Merck & Co., Momenta Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and Sandoz, Inc.

Biosimilars are versions of biological therapies comprised of complex living molecules. Lower in cost than their branded counterparts, biosimilars have been available in Europe for the past decade. In March, the Food and Drug Administration approved the first U.S. biosimilar; Sandoz's Zarxio, a biosimilar to Amgen Inc.'s Neupogen (filgrastim), which is prescribed to help prevent infections during cancer treatments.

Zarxio has yet to come to market. Many more biosimilars are expected to be approved in the coming months and years.

The Partnership Forum is one of many activities that AMCP is engaged in on biosimilars. AMCP has been a leading voice supporting a common naming convention for biosimilars and their reference products. AMCP also has been opposing state legislation that would place burdensome restrictions on the substitution of biosimilars that the FDA has deemed interchangeable with their reference products.

For information on AMCP's biosimilar efforts, visit www.amcp.org/AMCPSpecialtyPharmacyCentral/.