**Predictive Analytics Solutions Create New Opportunities for Life Sciences to Address Delayed Diagnosis and other Challenges in Multiple Sclerosis Treatment**

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**OptimizeRx Analysis Details Barriers to Therapy Initiation and Persistence for Multiple Sclerosis Patients**

ROCHESTER, Mich., Nov. 05, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- OptimizeRx Corp. (the "Company") (Nasdaq: OPRX), a leading provider of point-of-care technology solutions helping patients start and stay on therapy, published an analysis of multiple sclerosis (MS) research addressing the challenges and common causes of treatment delays and discontinuation in patients with MS, in particular noting the benefits of early MS treatment initiation in slowing disease progression and reducing areas of new damage in the brain and spinal cord. The analysis of existing research helps uncover opportunities for life sciences manufacturers to address the needs of both patients and healthcare providers (HCPs) including leveraging real-world data to inform HCP engagement – supporting timely identification and diagnosis of MS patients. This can help get patients started on therapy earlier, with tailored adherence programs to address unique MS challenges to support patients to remain persistent on doctor-recommended therapies.

The prevailing view among neurologists, supported by mounting evidence shown throughout the analysis, is that early treatment of MS has a positive impact on long-term patient outcomes. However, early therapy initiation is often delayed by challenges in correctly diagnosing patients in a timely manner. Once patients get started on therapy, another common preventable challenge they face is a lack of support in managing their condition – including awareness of symptoms, side effects, and benefits of early therapy initiation and the need to be persistent.

With the increase in the adoption of technology solutions across healthcare, MS therapy manufacturers can support HCPs by leveraging real-world data in new ways at the point-of-care (POC). The application of AI-driven predictive analytics to real-world evidence can support earlier diagnosis by connecting otherwise disparate critical patient data points in real-time. This application extends further to tailor digital patient support programs that can provide personalized educational resources throughout treatment and streamline access to financial assistance, which in turn can increase awareness and accessibility to help avoid treatment delays and abandonment.

***Delays in MS Treatment Initiation***
Research suggests there are several key causes of delayed MS treatment with the top reason being that patients are not diagnosed in a timely manner relative to when they present with symptoms. A 2017 survey of 5,300 MS patients showed that 42% of patients were initially misdiagnosed, and almost half of patients required five physician office visits to receive their MS diagnosis. Even after patients are correctly diagnosed, they may delay treatment or opt for treatments that address sporadic MS attacks. This can be due to the perception that their disease is mild, and they can wait to start therapy, or due to a lack of access to high-cost disease-modifying therapies (DMTs), compounded by concerns with the side effects associated with them. The most common access challenges reported by patients are their insurance requirements or coverage limitations, as well as the high cost of medications. In 2020, the median annual cost of branded DMTs was over $90,000, according to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Even in patients who have insurance, the high out-of-pocket costs can still be too much, leading as many as 14% of them to forgo DMTs because they cannot afford them.[1]

***Causes of Treatment Discontinuation and Non-Adherence***
High medication costs are a common cause for DMT discontinuation and non-adherence. According to the Journal of Clinical Psychology, 40% of MS patients report discontinuing therapy after three years. Recent data also points to avoidance coping as an overlooked reason for non-adherence. For some patients, the diagnosis can simply be too much to face, making it difficult to admit they have the disease, or rendering them unable to face the severity of their illness. Neurologists also face the challenge of educating the patient on the fact that DMTs do not treat the many symptoms of MS (e.g., dizziness, fatigue, pain, emotional problems, thinking/memory issues, muscle/movement challenges, vision abnormalities, bladder/bowel problems).

Adam Almozlino, vice president of AI solutions at OptimizeRx noted, "Understanding key factors that delay new patient starts on therapy is critical to reaching and educating both providers and MS patients. Personalized outreach and education can help get patients on the right therapy early and help keep them adherent to prevent disease progression. Combined with clinical expertise, advanced analytics and machine learning can be leveraged in analyzing real-world data to create predictive profiles of patients who meet the criteria for MS diagnostic screening. Similarly, advanced analytics can be applied to proactively identify HCPs treating those patients along the journey and predict the best moments to share MS treatment information with those HCPs at the point of care."

***Digital Technology Can Support Treatment Initiation and Adherence***
A better understanding of the challenges patients face – and where patients and providers need more support – creates new opportunities for pharma manufacturers to help patients improve long-term outcomes. These new opportunities for life sciences include:

- Supporting providers and patients with point-of-care programs that help find and diagnose MS patients earlier and reach those who discontinue therapy. Programs that capitalize on real-world data and predicative analytic technology help identify patients who should be referred to an MS specialist for earlier diagnosis and treatment intervention.
- Increasing patient education about the importance of early treatment, combined with awareness of financial assistance programs available, helps to decrease DMT cost.
- Streamlining access to financial assistance through digital patient adherence programs, and providing personalized side effects and DMT management support, help patients better cope with and manage their disease.

The research analysis can be downloaded at https://www.optimizerx.com/multiple-sclerosis.

**About OptimizeRx**
OptimizeRx is the best-in-class health technology company enabling care-focused engagement between life sciences organizations, healthcare providers, and patients at critical junctures throughout the patient care journey. Connecting over 60% of U.S. healthcare providers and millions of their patients through a proprietary point-of-care network, connectivity is facilitated via its integrated *Therapy Initiation and Persistence Platform*. This powerful digital healthcare solutions platform is transforming market and patient access with the life sciences market by unlocking:

• AI-directed, real-time HCP marketing to raise awareness of treatment benefits to give patients a timely start on therapy
• Streamlined communication and processes around therapy initiation to reduce abandonment through simplified enrollment
• Personalized, successful adherence programs to help patients stay on their doctor-recommended course of therapy

For more information, follow the company on Twitter, LinkedIn or visit www.optimizerx.com.

**Important Cautions Regarding Forward Looking Statements**
This press release contains forward-looking statements within the definition of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. These forward-looking statements should not be used to make an investment decision. The words 'estimate,' 'possible' and 'seeking' and similar expressions identify forward-looking statements, which speak only as to the date the statement was made. The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether because of new information, future events, or otherwise. Forward-looking statements are inherently subject to risks and uncertainties, some of which cannot be predicted, or quantified. Future events and actual results could differ materially from those set forth in, contemplated by, or underlying the forward-looking statements. The risks and uncertainties to which forward-looking statements are subject include, but are not limited to, the effect of government regulation, competition and other material risks.

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[1] Schoor R, Bruce A, Bruce J, et al. Reasons for nonadherence, response to treatment in an adherence intervention trial for relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis patients. J Clin Psychol 2019 Mar;75(3):380-391.



Source: OptimizeRx Corporation