



## OptimizeRx Survey Addresses Treatment Selection, Discontinuation and Switching in Anaplastic Lymphoma Kinase Positive Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer – an Indication with Limited Patient Population

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**Oncologists share the factors that influence treatment selection and persistence in ALK+ lung cancer, revealing how pharma manufacturers can better support patients and physicians**

ROCHESTER, Mich., Dec. 15, 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, releases [survey results](#) detailing the factors that influence oncologists' treatment selection and persistence in patients with anaplastic lymphoma kinase positive non-small cell lung cancer (ALK+ NSCLC), which occurs in just 5% of NSCLC patients with multiple first-line treatments approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The survey explores affordability dynamics, pharmaceutical manufacturers' support, challenges faced by patients in staying on therapy, and reasons why patients may switch or discontinue treatment.

**Major ALK+ NSCLC treatment challenges identified by oncologists include:**

- Treatment costs and insurance coverage limitations
- Managing treatment side effects or adverse events
- Patients' poor adherence to medication

**The survey results suggest multiple ways that pharma manufacturers can increase the support of physicians and patients including:**

- Investing in financial or patient support programs
- Raising awareness of available support among oncologists and patients
- Increasing the accessibility of field teams through digital channels

OptimizeRx survey results spotlight the broad treatment challenges faced by patients, physicians, and pharma manufacturers across therapy selection, initiation and persistence. Many ALK+ NSCLC patients switch or discontinue treatment for reasons other than lack of efficacy and disease progression – including adverse events, cost, or poor medication compliance. This strongly suggests that better patient support with managing the effects and costs of their treatment could significantly reduce the number of patients who stop or switch treatment.

Physicians may be able to do more to help ALK+ NSCLC patients manage their treatment and disease, but currently lack the support and resources – particularly, informed guidance on discussing treatment costs and financial support programs, as well as managing side effects for newer therapies. Creating and effectively deploying these resources could help pharma manufacturers carve out space for their brand in this competitive, niche market.

***As competing treatment options create more personalized choices for patients in specialty therapeutic spaces, pharma manufacturers need to think of expanded patient and physician support as key elements of their competitive market strategy.***

OptimizeRx's survey provides insights into how pharma manufacturers in the ALK+ NSCLC space can help patients start – and stay – on their therapy, which could also be applied to other competitive, niche oncology indications or specialty therapy areas with similar market dynamics.

Non-clinical factors may also play an important role in governing treatment choices. Despite the clinical advantages of newer therapies, Pfizer's Xalkori remains the top-rated drug by surveyed oncologists in multiple areas, with only Genentech's Alecensa taking the top spots on financial and patient support programs. In head-to-head comparisons of the current first-line treatment options:

- Pfizer's Xalkori was rated the top performer for the insurance approval process (61% of oncologists), oncologist experience with the drug (48% of oncologists), and field team support (48% of oncologists).
- Genentech's Alecensa was rated the top performer in terms of financial support provided to patients (52% of oncologists).
- No brand was the clear leader on patient adherence or support services, though Alecensa had a slight edge (35% of oncologists).

Patients face multiple challenges to staying on first-line therapy for ALK+ NSCLC, but surprisingly, many switch treatment for reasons other than lack of efficacy and disease progression - for example, due to adverse events (AE), out-of-pocket cost, or poor medication compliance. This strongly suggests that better patient support with managing the effects and costs of their treatment could significantly reduce the number of patients who stop or switch treatment.

- 44% of surveyed oncologists reported that patients' compliance with treatment is a significant problem.
- 75% of surveyed oncologists are likely to discuss treatment-related side effects, but only 51-52% consistently discuss patient support/financial assistance programs.
- 30% of surveyed oncologists believe drug manufacturers do not provide effective support for managing adverse events.

Surveyed oncologists reported that just 28% of their patients who switch first-line treatments do so due to lack of efficacy/disease progression, whereas 54% switched therapies for reasons such as adverse events, cost, or compliance:

- 20% switched due to adverse events/unacceptable toxicity
- 19% switched due to insurance issues or an inability to afford treatment
- 15% switched due to poor compliance/adherence

Survey results were taken from polling of 25 experienced U.S. medical oncologists. The respondents noted that they spend on average more than 75% of their time in clinical practice and have between them more than 10 ALK+ NSCLC patients.

The complete survey results can be downloaded at [www.optimizerx.com/research-and-reports/nsclc](http://www.optimizerx.com/research-and-reports/nsclc)

#### **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](http://www.optimizerx.com).

#### **Important Cautions Regarding Forward Looking Statements**

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