

# Protocol Analyzer



## Case Study

Helping patients and practices  
with the cost of care

**AmerisourceBergen**

## The challenge

The cost for treatments for cancer patients is nearly four times more than treatment for other health conditions.<sup>1</sup> And even with a typical employer-sponsored health insurance plan, a patient with 25 percent coinsurance would have monthly out-of-pocket costs of \$2,500 for a cancer drug that costs \$10,000 each month. That is nearly 70 percent of the average American's monthly income, according to a report from The Mesothelioma Center<sup>1</sup>, an advocacy center providing resources and information for patients with mesothelioma.

The financial pressures faced by patients and their families can easily become overwhelming – especially with higher deductibles and out-of-pocket costs.

Community providers have demonstrated commitment to their mission of patient access to quality care and have sought out solutions that not only help patients manage the cost of their care but also help with the financial pieces of running a practice.

1. <https://www.asbestos.com/featured-stories/high-cost-of-cancer-treatment/>





## The solution

A large multi-specialty community physician practice in the Northeast, seeing nearly 1,000 new patients annually, is using the cost analysis tool Protocol Analyzer to help patients understand their responsibility with the cost of their cancer care. The practice's financial analyst gathers the patient information – including insurance or lack of coverage – and puts it into potential treatment protocols, already in Protocol Analyzer. The tool's real-time pricing not only helps to identify the patient's financial responsibility but also helps the practice optimize reimbursements and manage their drug spend.

With Protocol Analyzer, the analyst noted, "we build the case for the drug treatment, administration, and office visits, including pre-meds, right into the platform while considering the contract with the patient's insurance." Sometimes the insurance company will pay between 70-80 percent of the total. With the insurance coverage information, the analyst will start searching for patient assistance foundations that might

have programs to help the patient with the difference in total cost of care. This community practice has been highly effective at securing assistance from foundations with more than \$2.6 million received last year in helping to cover outstanding balances for their patients.

With the printable estimate from Protocol Analyzer, the patient can see the cost of treatment, the estimated coverage from their insurer, and what the practice can identify in current patient assistance programs, so patients are not surprised when the bills start arriving.

"One of the nice things about Protocol Analyzer is that we can build special regimens based on the type of cancer and insurance contracts, making it easier to build favored programs based on current treatment protocols." That feature saves time for the analyst, providing the ability to make easily searchable comparisons.

## The results

### Cost estimates help patients understand the total cost of care

With robust drug and customized protocol economic modeling using evidence-based protocols, Protocol Analyzer enables practices to create a cost estimate for therapy quickly and accurately. In addition, the practice can create a printable estimate that financial counselors can share with patients. The printed estimate gives those counselors something tangible to speak about with the patient and their family.

### Automated reports lead to improved inventory and revenue cycle management

While the patient treatment is foremost, a secondary point is that the practice manages its costs. Before the practice began using Protocol Analyzer, the financial analyst used a more manual way of identifying the impact of treating patients. Now the analyst creates spreadsheets with data from the Nucleus inventory management system, claims data from the practice management system, and fee schedules and contracts. These monthly reports help the practice identify opportunities for improvement, specifically with finances.

With Protocol Analyzer's real-time pricing customized for the practice, the analyst has been able to easily identify changes in prices or even trends in pricing to manage inventory for the coming months, as well as see how much is dispensed and how much is wasted with each treatment, helping to support their claims. They also compare their data to the Medicare Fee Schedule to analyze reimbursement costs by protocol.

Reports created by the analyst have recognized updates on National Drug Codes (NDC) for accurate billing and reimbursement and helped to better manage inventory with real-time changes in pricing and rebates. In addition, the analyst noted that it helped with the treatment economics – to see how much the providers dispense and what the profit and/or loss is for each treatment protocol. "I use this to see trends for the past year against this year, helping me to better manage my contract with the GPO," noted the analyst.

"Early on, I had all these ideas of what kind of reports I wanted. [The Protocol Analyzer team] taught me how to create my favorites and provided me with the ability to make adjustments easily, like changing weight to adjust dosing and changing the treatment economics."

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- Financial analyst



A large multi-specialty community physician practice that sees nearly 1,000 new patients annually



They use the cost analysis tool Protocol Analyzer to help patients understand their financial responsibility



Protocol Analyzer also helps the practice optimize reimbursements and manage their drug spend

## Benefits of using Protocol Analyzer

- Built-in evidence-based protocols with compendia from the National Comprehensive Cancer Network® (NCCN®) and Clinical Pharmacology, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Average Sales Price (ASP) data, and physician fee schedules.
- Improved management of the practice oncology drug spend. With treatment protocols in the system and a timetable of potential treatment dates, practices can better manage inventory levels and their weekly or monthly drug spend.
- Customizable economic modeling based on varied protocols. Some payers have preferred treatments in their formularies and will reimburse at a higher rate on specific treatments, even analyzing the economics for newly released medications without J-codes.
- Reporting capabilities to look at real-time pricing for ASP trending, the Top 20/Bottom 20 drugs, and historical purchases.

To learn more about how Protocol Analyzer can help your practice better manage its oncology drug spend and optimize reimbursements, contact your ION Solutions or Oncology Supply strategic account manager.

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